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A
RECOMMENDATION
OF
BROTHERLY LOVE.

UPON THE PRINCIPLES OF
CHRISTIANITY.

TO WHICH IS SUBJOINED,
AN INQUIRY
INTO THE
TRUE DESIGN OF THE INSTITUTION
OF
MASONRY.

IN FOUR BOOKS.

By JAMES WRIGHT, A.M.
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT MAYBOLE.

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RECOMMENDATION

BROTHERLY LOVE

FROM THE PRESIDENT OF

CHRISTIANITY



MAY 30 A.M.

IN FOUR BOOKS

BY THE REV. J. H. W. L. G. S. J. H. W. L. G. S. J. H. W. L. G. S.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
 EARL OF CASSILIS.

MY LORD,

MY few hours vacant from the professional duties of a large parish have, for some time past, been employed in attempting to explain and enforce the sacred obligations of the second great commandment of the Divine Law, which enjoins the love of mankind. This publication contains my view of man's right behaviour to man. This subject is uniformly kept in sight throughout the whole book; and it is considered in a great variety of lights; with a view to suggest such arguments as might have weight with readers of different sentiments, and of a different turn of mind.

mind. My sole aim is to persuade my fellow-men, that in their reciprocal justice and disposition to do good to one another consists the best source of self-enjoyment, and of domestic peace, and of the sweetness of social life in general; and that malice and injustice are the cause both of producing self-torment and of disturbing the repose of mankind. Mens mutual love to one another is the golden chain which binds the human species together, and spreads a fragrant influence over every social party, and over every relative state of life; and it is a necessary preparation for our admission to the regions of everlasting peace and friendship.

If, my Lord, the adaption of the character of the chosen patron of a book to the subject which it treats of, could of itself be deemed a propriety, I have been additionally fortunate in offering this pub-

DEDICATION.

II

lication to your Lordship. No man was ever more susceptible than your Lordship, of all those impressions which are the effect of a tender and benevolent heart. This native temper, improved by science, and strengthened by exercise, gives an engaging colour to your conversation, and has rendered your whole life a course of strict justice and humanity. That goodness of heart and of temper, which never fails to procure the esteem and the love of mankind, and which in you expresses itself by a proneness to innocent gaiety and mirth, as well as by doing acts of mercy, is such a distinguished part of your character, that it equally renders you fond of agreeable society, and makes your company to be much courted both at home and in the capital of the empire, where you have been long obliged to reside for the sake of doing your duty in parliament, first in the House of Commons, and now in the House of

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Lords.

Lords. It is a strong proof of your disinterestedness, and of your disposition to prefer the public good to your own personal profit, that, though you are ever ready to do acts of kindness to the deserving, you have never asked one favour to yourself from any of his Majesty's ministers of state, as themselves acknowledge, during the many years of your attendance in parliament.

THERE is, in particular, one evidence of the power of the tender and benevolent affections of your heart, which I beg that your Lordship will forgive my strong desire of mentioning, although it be a case which your sensibility of mind renders both delicate and interesting: I mean the strong friendship which subsisted between your noble brother the late Earl of Cassilis and your Lordship; a friendship, the degree of which is but rarely equalled.

There

There are not on the records of history two brothers, or two companions, that were more affectionate and more pleasant in their lives, than you were. Your mutual friendship was the subject of common remark and of universal praise.

THIS circumstance, joined with your natural sensibility of heart, rendered that virtuous Nobleman's premature death one of the greatest trials of your whole life. He was cut off in the period which the world had expected would be but about the midst of his days; and at the very time when his great abilities of mind, and his eminent talents for business, were just about to be made known to the supreme court of the kingdom, to which he had been called by the suffrages of his Fellow-peers about fifteen months before his death.

By his death the world was deprived of a Nobleman of good sense and of great virtue. He was a sincere friend to mankind. The good of his country was an object ever near to his heart; and he used his utmost endeavours to promote its welfare. He possessed a most active mind; and although, in the forming of any plan, he was prudent and well resolved, yet in the execution of it he was spirited and determined. Although he was never prodigal, yet no man could be more liberal in his expences, when there was need of assisting his friend, or of promoting the good of society. Being a man of great wisdom and interest, he always added considerable weight to that side of the scale of public measures, in his own country, which he adopted. He understood business extensively, and he was exact in managing, and prompt in the finishing of it. Though his high rank and opulent fortune

fortune gave him an opportunity of enjoying the pleasures and amusements of cities and of courts; yet, till he became one of the Sixteen Scots Peers in Parliament, he resided mostly at home, that, from a sense of duty, he might watch over the interests of the district of the country wherein he lived, and that he might cause the profits of his large estate to circulate among those by whose industry they were raised. His virtues were no less observable in private than in public life. He was a truly just man, as appeared not only by the most sacred regard to the fulfilment of his promises, but also by a most scrupulous, but laudable, exactness in paying all his accounts, and the wages that were due by him to every description of those men whom he employed under him. He was a warm, sincere, and steady friend; and in expressing his patronage and affection, he scrupled not to put himself to

both toil and expence. Many will do him the justice to attest, that he often assisted those, whom he thought deserving of encouragement, by money as well as by his interest. Being himself unsuspicious and a stranger to deceit, he was sometimes led to be imposed upon by the designing, especially in those cases wherein the humane feelings of the heart were touched. Even to his enemies he showed that mildness and placability of temper which is always the mark of a great mind.

In domestic life, that worthy nobleman gave full proof of his being both a great and a good man. Some men have two opposite characters; a good name when they are abroad among strangers, and a bad estimation when they are at home among the members of their own family. But as the head of a family, and as a relation, the character of that Nobleman shone with an amiable radiance. As he
was

was esteemed among strangers, for he was much respected and beloved by his kinsmen, by his guests, and by his servants. To every one who visited him he was most polite and affable. No one that was ever in his company, could fail to observe how much he excelled in observing all the rules of good-breeding; the correctness of which, as well as of his other elegant and useful accomplishments, was much improved by his having, in his younger years, travelled much in foreign countries. On no man did nobility ever sit, at once, with more dignity and more ease. His own exact propriety of behaviour to others was such, that no man found himself at liberty not to treat him respectfully; and yet so great was his pleasing affability and good temper, that every one was made easy and happy in his company. Whilst he was naturally social, and fond of indulging himself in, and of promoting in others,

others, an innocent vein of pleasantry and good humour; yet so attentive was he in points of decorum, that no one could easily forget the respect due to his high rank. In him his relations found an agreeable and an affectionate companion, and a most faithful friend.

THE last scene of that Nobleman's life, while it created much grief to his friends, was improved by himself to an occasion of displaying the virtues of a great mind. In the full vigour of life he was seized with some internal disorder, which continued for the space of four months, and by which he suffered the most exquisite pain. The strong hand of death had laid fast hold on him; and therefore the disease, in spite of the power of medicine, made gradual progress on his bodily constitution, which was naturally stronger than that of most men. His patience, during the whole

whole course of that long trial, was most exemplary, and his resignation to the will of Heaven was such as discovered a devotional heart. So great was his fortitude and self-command, that, during the severe affliction of all those wearisome days and nights, he spoke not one fretful word to friends, or to physicians, or to servants. His exemplary patience and resignation was a proof of his stedfast hope of that better state of things which was soon to be disclosed to him, especially as he seemed, even from the beginning of his illness, to know that he was dying. Whatever fort of a feeling Death is, he knew it; for his judgment was sound and distinct to the last, and he spoke both to his friends and to the physician about two hours before he died. Perceiving, by means of something which the physician had either said or done, that his dissolution was just at hand, he, with a degree of strength which he

he was not supposed at that time to have had, placed himself in a decent posture, with his head leaning upon the palm of his right hand, and calmly fell asleep in death, on the 30th day of November 1775. No frightful apprehensions of future wo discomposed the last serious hours of his life. None of those terrors of Divine wrath, which alarm guilty souls, and which make the valley of death appear to them to be covered with blackness and horror, disturbed his peaceful latter end. Long before the solemn hour of his dissolution came, his peace was made with God.

ALTHOUGH it pleased God, all whose ways are unerring, to deprive the world so soon of a Nobleman of such great worth, yet He has also shown His goodness in appointing one to succeed him, who not only inherits his titles and large estate, but who is also possessed of his virtues: one who

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DEDICATION

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to an enlightened mind and a benevolent heart joins the most polite and engaging manners: one whose integrity is incorrupt, and whose taste in the fine arts is seen by some monuments of it which will be lasting, and to which a multitude of artificers and of the poor have been singularly obliged,

I HAVE presumed, my LORD, to place this Treatise under your patronage; well knowing, that your enlarged mind will make allowance for its many imperfections; and that, if there is any thing either in the general spirit or arrangement of it that is worth the commending, your Lordship will immediately discern it: for it is well known that you are one of the best classical scholars of your time.

THEO, my LORD, that you will forgive my taking this occasion of declaring, that

I

I have a most grateful sense of the many
favour's which I have received both from
the late Earl of Cassilis, and from your
LORDSHIP.

I AM,

MY LORD,

WITH THE WARMEST GRATITUDE,

AND WITH THE HIGHEST ESTEEM,

YOUR LORDSHIP'S MOST FAITHFUL

AND MOST OBEDIENT

HUMBLE SERVANT,

JAMES WRIGHT.

P R E F A C E.

THE subject of this religious and moral treatise is a matter of general concern to mankind. All men have an equal interest in knowing their reciprocal duties to one another, or what is comprehended in that great precept of the Divine Law to “love our neighbour,” which God has declared to be the sum of man’s duty to man. Love to our neighbour is the fulfilment of the whole law of God, in so far as it respects a right behaviour to our fellow-men. Thus saith the great Apostle Paul *, “Owe no man any thing, but “to love one another : for he that loveth “another hath fulfilled the law. For this,” or from a reverence for the obligation of this duty, he adds, “Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou “shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false “witness, Thou shalt not covet;” and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely,

* Rom. xiii. 8.—10,

ly, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: Therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." In this rich and valuable passage in the inspired testimony to the truth, the holy apostle sheweth, that love is the first principle of every duty that we owe to our neighbour, and that the transgression of every rule of justice and charity proceeds chiefly from the want of a proper degree of love. As love is the spring of every sort of right behaviour to mankind, or that upon which a regard to the rules of righteousness and charity, in all cases, is founded; so from the want of this principle do chiefly arise those disorders which prevail in human governments and societies, and all those injuries for which men have reason to complain of one another. From the want of the principle of love to mankind proceeds the withholding of respect to superiors, and the supercilious treatment of inferiors, and the commission of the guilt of murder, of adultery, and of theft, and the giving of false evidence

evidence upon oath, and covetousness, and all those numberless acts of baseness and injustice and cruelty, which are branches of one or other of these radical crimes. Our SAVIOUR has also placed the magnitude and extent of this duty of brotherly love in its proper light, by that answer which He gave to the lawyer of the Phari-
 faical sect, who asked him *, “ Which is the
 “ great commandment in the law? Jesus
 “ said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord
 “ thy God with all thy heart, and with all
 “ thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is
 “ the first and great commandment. And
 “ the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love
 “ thy neighbour as thyself. On these two
 “ commandments hang all the law and
 “ the prophets.” Since men are account-
 able to the Supreme God for their treat-
 ment of one another; and since on their
 treating one another well depends much of
 their peace and comfort on the earth, and
 the very salvation of their souls; it is of
 the utmost importance to know, or even

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* Mat. xxii. 36.—39.

to be reminded of, that which GOD has enacted in a table of laws, which were promulgated by His own solemn voice, audible on Mount Sinai, accompanied with thunder and lightnings, those awful signs of His Majesty, and of the exercise of His regal power.

Though the Gospel represents love to mankind as a certain debt which we owe, and though it be the voice both of natural sentiment and of reason that this is true; yet when we look into the manners of the world, we are tempted to think, that the bulk of men either do not understand the nature and the obligations of this debt, or that, at least, they unhappily forget that GOD has commanded them to pay it on the pain of His displeasure. To the misconception or neglect of this momentous duty we may ascribe the cause of more than one half of the calamities which men have always suffered, and do still suffer, in this state of mortality. Men suffer far more from the avarice and selfishness and cruelty of their fellow-creatures, than from those

those strokes which are immediately providential, or from natural diseases and adverse fortune. It is a thing mournful to observe, with what a degree of injustice and uncharitableness men treat one another, in defiance of the voice of nature, and of those laws of Heaven, which have been most solemnly promulgated. In the case of those acts of injustice and of unmercifulness which human laws do not reach, we see men committing them with the same indifference and frequency, as if they were not responsible for such violations of moral duty either to God or to their own consciences. In defiance of the most solemn prohibitions, men oppress one another with greediness, and one order of men treats those of another class, as if they were not creatures of the same species, or as if they had not the same natural rights and the same feelings with themselves. Are not the sacred obligations of brotherly love disregarded by the world in a mournful degree, since we see neighbours wilfully taking advantage of each other's ignorance or unskilfulness

or straitened circumstances? Is it not from the absence of love to our neighbour, that we so often hear uncharitable censures and invidious remarks passed upon those who are not in the company, and that so much injustice is practised in mens dealings with one another? From this cause, likewise, it happens that bad wares are imposed upon the purchaser in the name of commodities of a good quality, and that the most villanous arts are practised to defraud the ensurancer. Is not the principle of love quite extinct in the breasts of those who add to the sufferings of their fellow-creatures by insult and by wanton oppressions? From a total want of Christian love, we see man basely adding to the losses and calamities of those who suffer by fire and by shipwreck. From whence comes it, that the commanders of fleets and of armies are often inattentive to the health and the morals of those under their authority? From what cause does it happen, that the soldiers, notwithstanding their having officers to teach and
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to command them, have often been allowed to insult and to plunder the peaceable and industrious citizens, and to commit barbarous outrages against the persons and the property of the useful and defenceless inhabitants of the country? If men regarded that voice which speaks to them from above, commanding them to love their fellow-creatures, and to treat them with justice and mercy, would we hear so much of the extortions and cruelties of governors of provinces?

As the want of love to mankind is the chief cause of those disorders and miseries which prevail in the different societies of mankind, so a reverence for this duty is productive of many sweet and blessed effects. It makes families dwell together in peace and unity. It diffuses a spirit of friendship and good-will through every assembly of men. Its fruits are harmony and good order, mutual forbearance and charity, and a pleasing ground of mens reciprocal confidence in one another. The sentiment of love to mankind is a thing

pleasant for its own sake. He who feels it is at peace with himself. "His soul dwelleth at ease." It is a temper which ought to be cultivated for the sake of the immediate pleasures which it yields. A heart that is open to all those fine and tender emotions which a concern for the state of other men is capable of exciting, feels a kind and a degree of pleasure, which the unsocial and selfish man is a stranger to. Love to mankind is the principle which unites the human species. It interests us in the fate of others, even of those whom we never saw. It is, therefore, the foundation of that pleasure which we receive both from real history and from romance. The love which we feel to the great and good men of past ages, the interest which we take in whatever has befallen them, our detestation of the cruel and unjust, our sympathy with the unfortunate, our eagerness to see those delivered from distress whose misfortunes have arisen from the injustice and the cruelty of others, or from their own inflexible virtue, and
our

our desire of seeing those punished who have brought calamities upon the innocent, all these strong and affecting emotions, I say, take their rise from that sentiment of love to mankind which God has implanted in our nature.

This suggests a reason why some romances, which are descriptions of fictitious characters may have a bad effect upon young and weak minds. If human nature is misrepresented, as it often is in description, virtue is not seen in its proper and distinguishing colours, and vice is often so modified, that it creates too little disgust. The natural affections of love and pity and admiration are also directed to improper objects, whereby the mind is led into a train of wild and fanciful ideas, which, instead of improving, corrupt, the heart. The heart is indeed softened; but it is not sufficiently guarded against the receiving of wrong impressions, because false virtue is not sufficiently distinguished from the true, and the passions are awakened and inflamed, without being

directed to proper objects with a view to answer some good end. The affections are stirred without a just cause, and are in the state of a mob, the greater part of whom know not wherefore they are come together. Original nature is always more perfect than any description of it that can be given; by which it will not be supposed that I can possibly mean to condemn the giving descriptions of nature, but only to guard the young against the being misled by false representations of it. When characters of false virtue are so described as to engage the heart, the young and the weak are misled in judging of true virtue, as one is deceived in judging of the face of a man whose portrait is a false likeness. And when scenes of distress, which lie beyond the limits of nature and of ordinary life, are so described as to touch the heart, the mind is apt to be led into error in judging of the duty of kindness and charity. Therefore, the best method of improving the benevolence of the heart, is the exercise of sincere love to the characters of those
virtuous

virtuous men who once lived, and still more to those of our fellow-men whom we see and converse with. If by descriptions, which, even when they have a truly useful and moral tendency, are nothing but mere copies of nature, we feel ourselves interested in the fate of those whom we never saw, how much more ought known and living characters, who are all real originals, and not mere copies of human nature, to excite our love and pity and admiration?

All those descriptions of human nature which tend to improve, as well as to interest, the heart, are truly useful, because they strengthen our best affections by exercising them. In this way a romance itself may be so wrote as to do some good. But still it ought to be considered, that the exercise of love and compassion and esteem toward living and known, or toward real, characters, constitutes a much greater degree of virtue than the exercising the same affections toward characters which are merely fanciful. Love and esteem and pity, and every other kind of affectionate regards

regards, directed to fictitious characters, are nothing more than the effect of natural and instinctive impulse; but by loving and admiring virtuous characters which are real, we improve and strengthen the heart, and by expressing our love to living and known characters in the acts of kindness and mercy, we perform that service to them which God has required, and in which our duty consists. The descriptions of romances do merely awaken and stir the affections, without pointing at any particular object, by which they can be drawn out into active virtue; but love directed to living and known characters leads us to join immediate virtuous action to natural sentiment. In the one case, our kind affections are in little danger of going into excess; but in the other case, our affectionate regards are apt to turn wild and extravagant, and to exceed the limits of reason and propriety. In the case of living characters, our kind affections cannot be misplaced, if they are under the direction of reason; but in the case of feigned characters,

characters, which are held up as objects of love and esteem, many amiable persons are lost both to themselves and to society from judging of a right behaviour to their fellow-men by rules which are false. If the natural sentiment of benevolence was sufficiently strong, and if it was properly directed, we would be much more affected by the characters, and by the good and bad fortune, of our friends and acquaintances, than by the subjects of romance.

It is the duty of all parents to inculcate early upon their children a strong sense of the obligation of the duty of love to mankind. They ought to be informed, with most affectionate pains, that their happiness, through life, depends much upon their being possessed of a kind and benevolent heart. By teaching them early lessons of justice and mercy, parents and teachers of youth will strew in their whole path the seeds of sweetness and peace, and will prevent much of that bitterness from being mingled with their cup, which

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the malevolent passions never fail to pour into it. This is laying the foundation of that favour and esteem of other men, which their benevolence and integrity will not fail to secure to them; and it is guarding them against that criminal indifference to the peace and welfare of others, which seldom fails to be the source of their own, as well as of their neighbour's, misfortunes. By inculcating upon children a sincere love to mankind, you prepare them for being amiable members of a family, and useful members of the state. Hereby you guard them against that selfishness and injustice, which, in every country, extinguish the spirit of true patriotism. They ought to be told, that, without the principle of love to mankind, they are destitute of that goodness of heart, which is essentially necessary to a man's doing his duty in parliament, and to his commanding a fleet or an army, and to his guiding well the affairs of the state. Sincere love to mankind, if it is accompanied with a sound understanding, never fails to procure esteem and kind affection to those
who

who command, and good treatment to those who obey. By softening and humanizing mens natures, it makes them consider the distresses of others as being, in some degree, their own. It begets mercy in those who govern, and it reconciles the governed to every reasonable act of a dutiful obedience. It is the pleasant bond of affection and of union among all mankind. Love to mankind is that principle, which will render them the real disciples of CHRIST, and it will secure their right, through grace, to the happiness of a future state.

IN-

who command, and good treatment to those who obey. By following and humanizing men's natures, it makes them consider the distresses of others as being in some degree their own. It begets mercy in those who govern, and it reconciles the governed to every reasonable act of a dutiful obedience. It is the pleasure bond of affection and of union among all mankind. Love to mankind is that principle which will render them the real disciples of Christ, and it will secure their right through grace, to the happiness of a future state.

INTRODUCTION.

LOVE to GOD is the first and great commandment of His law. Though the nature and essence of the Supreme Being be invisible, His real existence and His attributes are so fully manifested in His works of creation and providence, and especially in the person of His own Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, that He is the natural and proper object of the love of His creatures. His love to us is so confessedly great and striking, that it is well fitted to beget our warmest gratitude and love to Him. His love to us being greater than that which any of our fellow-creatures can feel for us, He is therefore the proper object of our supreme and most ardent love. The invisibility of His nature is no argument against our loving GOD, more than the invisibility of the human mind is an argument against our loving our fellow-men, whom we love, not so much on account of the properties which we see, as on account of the virtues of the mind, which

which is a thing invisible. Love to GOD is the first and great commandment of His law, because it has for its object the most amiable and the most adorable Being in the universe, and because the sentiment of love to Him has a more commanding power over the heart than any other principle. Love to GOD is a principle which is universal in the manner of its operation, or it extends to every case of duty. It is perfective of human nature, because it leads us to imitate GOD Himself, who is a perfect Being. Love to Him is also the soul of every sort of religious obedience. It is the spirit which animates all our acts of devotion, and its influence upon the heart gives a sanctified colour to every part of our whole life.

Next in the degree of importance and of extent to the principle of love to GOD, is the sentiment of love to mankind. The one principle resembles the other, in respect of having its origin in the nature of man, and in respect of usefulness to the best interests both of individuals and of society,

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society, and in respect of the pleasant sensations which the exercise of it raises in the soul. Though love to mankind be a natural sentiment, and though the obligation of it be still more powerfully enforced by the doctrine of revealed religion, yet love to God is that principle which tends greatly to strengthen and improve it. They are principles which include each other. In the case of a Christian especially, they must be coexistent sentiments of the heart. "If a man say, I love God," "and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for" "he that loveth not his brother whom he" "hath seen, how can he love God, whom" "he hath not seen? And this com-
mandment have we from Him, that" "he who loveth God, love his brother" "also*"

Our SAVIOUR calls the Divine precept to love our neighbour, a new commandment. Thus he saith †, "A new com-
mandment I give unto you, That ye" "love one another, as I have loved you,"
D "that

* 1 John iv. 20, 21.

† John xiii. 34.

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“that ye also love one another.” He does not hereby mean, that men had not been commanded to love one another, before the time of His appearing in the world. This great law of love to our neighbour was, from the beginning, wrote in the table of every man’s own heart, and it was contained in that code of laws, which GOD Himself delivered, by His servant Moses, to the people of Israel. But His precept to love one another is “a new commandment,” because Himself hath exemplified it in a new and perfect manner. In Him we see a pattern of benevolence of soul, which is pure and unallayed and perfect. In His life we see the adorable goodness and love of the Divine Nature shining forth most conspicuously. In Him we see a most bright example of the beneficence of the Parent-Fountain of love and of charity. The LORD JESUS “was the brightness of the FATHER’s glory, and the express image of His person.” Therefore said He to his disciple Thomas*, “If ye
“ had

* John xiv. 7.

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“had known me, ye should have known my Father also.” And to Philip he said *, “He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.” The discoveries which God has made of Himself to the Christian world in the person of JESUS CHRIST, which far exceed those of the light of reason, and even those of the Jewish revelation, are sufficient to raise the soul into all the fervours of pious thankfulness and praise. CHRIST’s precept to love one another is therefore “a new commandment,” because we are bound to “love one another,” as He “hath loved us:” and his love to us was such, that it exemplified, or set before the eyes of men, the very goodness of the Divine Nature. It is a new commandment, in respect of the degree of the perfection of its exemplification. It is also a new commandment, in respect of the kind and of the power of those motives by which the observance of it is enforced. By the doctrine of the Gospel arguments are used for the exercise of love

D 2. *any other than this* to
* John xiv. 9.

to mankind, which are of peculiar force, and which were unknown before the Christian æra. We Christians are related to one another by ties of heavenly consanguinity; for, through CHRIST, who is our Mercy-seat, or the declaration of the Divine Love to us, we are taken into a covenant-relation to GOD. We have all one right of citizenship in Heaven. We believe in one GOD, who is our common Father. We have all one LORD, one faith, and one hope of eternal life. By the same ordinance of baptism we are all ingrafted into CHRIST, or received into His church; and, by an abiding relation through faith and obedience, our souls are sanctified and nourished by His word and spirit, as the branches are nourished by the stock of the vine whereon they grow. By our communion service, at the sacrament of the LORD's Supper, we recognise the seal of our hopes, and publicly declare, that we accept of the great salvation which is offered to us in the Gospel, on the terms of faith and repentance. Wherefore, we

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Christians have a new ground of love to one another by a new relation of mutual and spiritual propinquity, which is constituted by the grace of that new covenant, the promises of which CHRIST hath sealed with his blood.

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INTRODUCTION

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BOOK

Book I.

**On the OBLIGATIONS to BROTHERLY
Love.**

CHAP. I.

Love to Mankind is a natural Sentiment.

GOD has laid men under a strong obligation to live together in a state of friendship, because He has formed the human mind with a natural propensity to love, and to wish to do good to others. With His own hand has He wrote the sentiment of reciprocal love upon the hearts of men. By a kind of natural instinct the heart melts

into tendernefs, at the fight, or even at the relation, of other mens woes; and it is elevated with joy upon hearing of their good fortune. Brotherly love being a sentiment which is interwoven with the nature of man, its voice cannot be difregarded, without fhewing a want of reverence for the authority of Him who made us fuch creatures as we are. Since this is a principle which coexifts with our being, we may be fure that the Supreme Creator has endowed us with it for the purpofe of our obeying its dictates. For as it is the province of a creature who is endowed with reafon, to regulate and govern the appetites and paffions of the inferior region of his nature, fo it is his duty to ftrengthen and improve the moral affections of the heart, of which love to mankind is one of the nobleft. The greater our fenfibility is to the fentiment of compaffion and love, and to all thofe tender fenfations which proceed from true benevolence of foul, the more perfect does our nature become, and the more do we refemble the merciful and gracious

cious spirits above. The perfection of the soul exists in a perfect degree of sensibility to those sentiments of piety and charity, which their respective objects are fitted to excite. As the sentiment of love to mankind holds a rank among the affections of the heart next to the principle of love to God, therefore its operation constitutes in this world, and will continue to produce in a future state, one of the chief sources of the felicity of man. It is therefore a pity that hatred or malice should be allowed to tarnish and to weaken a principle, on the free exercise of which our happiness does so greatly depend. God has shown its importance in the system of human nature, by His having made it an original and instinctive principle, which reason and religion may strengthen and improve, but which nothing can wholly eradicate. It is that voice of Nature which has spoke throughout all ages and nations, and which will ever continue to be a leading feature in the character of man. Among tribes of rude savages, as well as among

among the more polished nations, the sentiment of brotherly love shews its commanding power. By education, however, and by the advantages of an enlightened and polished age, brotherly love, with all its sister virtues, ought to be strengthened, and our sensibility to all its tender emotions ought to be enlivened and improved.

Brotherly love is not only an original sentiment, but it is also of such a nature that it forms a chain of connection among all mankind. It forms a strong bond of union among the whole human race. It operates, like the power of magnetic attraction, in making every man take some degree of interest in all those of his own species. Hence we are interested in the good or bad fortune of those whom we have never seen. We esteem the man of great worth, whom we have heard of only by fame. We admire the gallant hero, who lived in an age far remote from our own. We love the generous patriot, who died long before we were born. We love
virtue

virtue even in an enemy. We take delight in hearing that a man of worth is rewarded for his virtuous deeds, and that the cruel and the unjust man is punished for what he has made the innocent suffer. We weep at the representation of feigned distress, because it is a picture of what may befall our fellow-creatures in real life. This interest which nature forces us to take in the good or bad fortune of other men, is the foundation of that *power*, by which the tragedian melts his audience into tears, and by which the barrister often saves the life of the criminal, and by which the preacher forces the miser to go to his coffers, and give to the poor. If we love those whom we never saw, and if we take an interest even in fictitious characters, how much more ought we to love our friends, and our neighbours and acquaintances, who have a real existence, and whom we see and converse with? It is unfortunate, however, that the very circumstances of neighbourhood and acquaintance, which ought to interest men the

the more in one another's good or bad fortune, do often serve to estrange them from each other, and to be a ground of mutual hatred and variance. It is a common thing to see some more attached to strangers, and more willing to do what may be subservient to their interest, than to do good to those who are of their immediate acquaintance, and who live in their neighbourhood, and who, perhaps, feed and clothe them. The cause of this behaviour, which, at first sight, seems to contradict the fact here maintained, that love to mankind is a natural sentiment, is quite obvious. In the case of strangers, nothing, perhaps, has ever happened to interrupt the operation of the natural principle of kindness and good-will; but in the case of those who live together in the same house, or in the same neighbourhood, interferences of interest and of inclination do frequently occur. Among these there often happens a contrariety of opinions and a discordancy of wishes and desires. Among them reproofs are administered, which give offence,

fence, and advices are given, which imply blame: and these excite the irascible passions, and prevent the natural current of love from flowing, even in that channel where its streams ought to be the sweetest and the most copious. But this does not prove, that brotherly love is not an original and an inherent principle. It only serves to shew, that its power may be weakened and suppressed, by discordant interests and inclinations, and by the criminal indulgence of malevolence and bad temper.

Was there no interference of worldly interest, or were there no causes of envy and of jealousy among men, sincere love would hold its empire even upon the earth, and the sweetness of reciprocal affection would be felt in every family, and in every neighbourhood and society of men. Was this amiable native sentiment cultivated with due care, and were the obstacles to its operation, all of which originate from weakness and malice, diligently guarded against, it would then shew its blessed power over the human heart, and its happy

py tendency to promote the true felicity of mankind. It would then be better perceived, how eligible God has made the state of man even here below, did we not deliberately create many great evils to ourselves, by a wilful perversion of the original principles of our nature. The sentiment of mutual love would then be the happy mean of sweetening human existence, and of enlivening all the innocent joys of this mortal life. How very different is the state of a family or neighbourhood, wherein mutual kindness and affectionate regards to one another subsist, from that family or neighbourhood, wherein there is open strife, or wherein a constrained behaviour and severe looks betray the inward jealousies and the rancour of their hearts? The one family, or society, spend their days in pain and in bitterness. They pour poison into every one of their enjoyments. They render their whole life a scene of disorder and misery and guilt: and they raise up a gloomy cloud to darken even their setting sun, and their hopes

hopes respecting a future existence. But the other family or society, among whom mutual affection and concord reign, enjoy constant peace and cheerfulness. To them every enjoyment is sweetened by sympathetic affection. Their minds are quiet and unruffled. Their life is pleasant and joyous and serene; and they are taking one necessary and sure method of securing to themselves a state of eternal peace and felicity. How great a gift has Heaven bestowed on men, by implanting in their nature the sentiment of brotherly love, if we would learn to use that gift properly! How good has the gracious Creator been to us, in His having formed us with that original dictate of the heart, obedience to which yields the sweetness of private friendship, and the happiness of domestic life, and a profusion of delights arising from social intercourse with mankind in general!

By following this sweet impulse of nature, which is the voice of God within us, telling the whole human race that they are friends and brethren, we would walk

walk among our fellow-men as in the circle of our friends, to whom we ought to have a kind regard, and to none of whom we ought to do an injury. Though a greater degree of our affection and beneficence is due to those, to whom we are related by the ties of consanguinity and of private friendship, and of gratitude and acquaintance; yet our brotherly love ought not to be confined to those of our own nation, nor to those who live with us in the same house or neighbourhood, nor to those who are related to us by the ties of blood. It is the voice of Nature, or of inherent sentiment, that every reasonable creature is the object of our kindness and affection. Though he be not of our acquaintance, though he be a stranger, though he be not of our own nation, nay, though he be our enemy by political or religious or national prejudices, we ought, nevertheless, to love him. Though he be a stranger to us, yet since he is our fellow-creature, he is intitled to our affection and good offices. The shape of his body
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and the faculties of his mind are such as bear a resemblance to our own. In susceptibility of enjoyments and sufferings, he is altogether such a creature as we are; and his feelings, in the case of prosperity and of adversity, are like to our own. These similar circumstances of his nature and of his state give him a claim to our compassion, and to our affectionate regards. Therefore, if ye will listen to the voice of instinctive benevolence, it will tell you, that, if he is naked, ye ought to clothe him, and that, if he is hungry, ye ought to feed him, and that, if he is thirsty, ye ought to give him drink. Though he be a stranger and your national enemy, yet your own feelings, as men, do teach you, that ye ought not to despise or injure him. Though he be in your power, or though he be your prisoner, you are, nevertheless, obliged by the ties of a common nature, to treat him with mercy. Consider, O man, that the stranger, for whom thou, it may be, feelest no compassion, and whom thou treatest with injustice and
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cruelty, may have parents, whose hearts are tender and affectionate; and he perhaps is their only son, for whom they daily pray, and from whom they have long wished to hear. He, perhaps, has a wife and children, who would weep if they saw him in distress. Perhaps he has brothers or sisters, whose hearts would melt at the sight, or even at the relation, of his misfortunes. Were the natural ties of brotherly affection more attended to, or did we consider that what is another man's state of misery to-day, may soon be our own, mutual affection and sympathy would be quicker in every breast, and national prejudices and antipathies would be greatly lessened. Local distinctions, which too often prevail among even those of the same nation, would not be so marked as to have any improper influence on the minds of men, and those mutual animosities and jealousies, which shamefully prevail among religious sects and denominations, would not only be happily abated, but would even give place to mutual charity

rity and forbearance. Men would become one in affection, whereby those opposite interests and interferences, which are unavoidable in a state of society, would not be able, in so lamentable a degree as commonly happens, to dissolve the ties of friendship and good neighbourhood.

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CHAP.

CHAPTER II.

Reason teaches, that Men ought to Love one another.

REASON, which is given us to direct the will, and a capacity of religion, by which the soul acknowledges God, are the two noblest prerogatives of man. By these, still more than by the shape of our bodies, we are distinguished from the brute animals, and are raised far above them. Reason is of great assistance to the moral sentiments of the heart. It directs us in the proper choice of their objects, and in the degree of ardour with which we ought to pursue them. In the case of love to mankind, reason both shows who ought to have the preference in the degree of our affection, and remonstrates against our allowing the operation of this principle to be stopped, by the indulgence of the unfocial and malevolent passions. Natural sentiment is too weak a principle of right conduct, without the direction and sup-

support of the reasoning faculty, which, whilst it keeps us from doing that injustice to others, to which we may be incited by false representations, or by sudden fits of anger, or by prejudice and malice, does also shew us the folly of depriving ourselves of the sweet advantages of our neighbour's friendship and society, and of involving ourselves in a series of strife and contention, on account of what can often bring us but little profit, and which may be the source of much pain and inconvenience.

Reason tells us, that the society of our fellow-men is a thing necessary to the true enjoyment of life. Let a man be possessed of every thing that can minister to his happiness, let him enjoy every other source of pleasure, except that of society, and this want alone would take away sweetness from every other comfort. A state of solitude is joyless and gloomy. The pleasures of prosperity cannot be so sensibly felt, without the congratulations of friends, who take an interest in our good fortune,

and who rejoice with us. Neither would a state of adversity be supportable, unless we were, in part, disburthened of our griefs, by the consolations arising from the sympathy and the conversation of our fellow-men. "Iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the face of his friend *." It is the obvious dictate of reason, that we ought to treat our fellow-men with kindness and with polite manners, because their society is a thing indispensably requisite to the comfortable enjoyment of life. We ought to avoid the giving of offence, and we ought to maintain a friendly correspondence with those among whom we live, with a degree of care that is proportionable to the value which our own reason tells us that we ought to set upon the pleasures of society. These being the sweetest of all our enjoyments, and existence itself being scarce supportable without them, we ought to strive to maintain a state of reciprocal friendship with our neighbours and acquaintances with as much vigilance as that

* Prov. xxvii. 17.

that which we use in defending our richest treasure.

Society is a thing no less necessary to mutual defence, than to the pleasurable enjoyment of life. The association of tribes of men, or their collecting in numbers into one neighbourhood, is no less a suggestion of reason, than the effect of mens natural love of society. A solitary individual is a helpless creature. Even a whole family, living quite detached from neighbours, are, especially in a barbarous age, in a sort of defenceless state. Hence reason early suggested the propriety of mens associating together in villages and in cities, for the sake of securing themselves against the hostile attacks of enemies and depredators. A state of society is also essentially requisite to the ornament and embellishment of life, as well as to its pleasure and security. Few of the occupations necessary in a state of society, which is improved in any degree beyond that of mere hunting and fishing, can be pursued without the assistance of

others. Without mens receiving the mutual aid of one another, the arts and sciences could not be advanced to any degree of perfection, nor could manufactures and commerce be at all carried on. Are not these strong arguments for union and good agreement among mankind? From this view of the state of civil society, we see men linked together in a strong bond of union and of interest, which ought to be most sacredly preserved, because the dissolving of it is productive of many fore evils. Even the distinction of ranks, which often creates pride and haughtiness in superiors, and envy and discontent in inferiors, is a thing necessary to the wise regulation and the good government of society. Let not the powerful and the wealthy treat those who are below them with injustice and insolence, because the labours of the poor are necessary to support their splendid and sumptuous state: and let not the lower classes of mankind be seized with envy, nor let them murmur on account of the comparative disadvantages of their rank,

rank, because the Supreme Disposer of all things has appointed that there should be subordinate stations, and because the superior wisdom and the influence of the great are necessary to establish peace and good order, and to give strength and permanency to the government of societies of men. Therefore, among even superiors and inferiors brotherly affection ought to subsist, because their right treatment of one another is founded on such ties both of duty and of interest as are very strong.

Since the collection of numbers of men into one neighbourhood or society is a thing necessary, for the reasons which have been just now mentioned, or since the multiplication of the human species renders it a thing unavoidable, reason concurs with the Divine Command, in urging the propriety and the necessity of their "following the things which make for peace." The happiness and the prosperity of all societies of men, from the cottage to the empire at large, depends upon every man's giving to another what is his due, and upon their

their treating one another with affability and courteous manners, flowing from a principle of real affection and good-will. Wherever jealousies and animosities prevail, whether it be in a family, or in a larger community, or in the management of the important affairs of the state, there strength and prosperity do always decline, and there confusion in business and distress of mind do always prevail. The more that a society is improved, the greater need is there, on that account, of mens being at pains to strengthen the sentiment of brotherly love, because with the extension of commerce, and with the increasing opulence and power of the state, causes of competition and grounds of rivalship do also multiply. Therefore, let parties always contend with candour and fairness. Let competitors struggle without malice and injustice; and let rivals take no unwarrantable methods of supplanting each other. While they pursue the same object of desire, and while each wishes to be the successful candidate, let each, at the same time,

time, give the same weight of allowance which himself takes. Self-love, it is true, is a natural principle, but still we ought to beware of allowing it to make us do what is unjust. Let men always consider, that they have the same nature, and that, therefore, they ought to grant to others the same indulgence which themselves crave. If it is lawful for thee to strive for preferment, is it not equally lawful for thy neighbour to seek promotion? Has not he, in most cases, just as good a right to contend for power and for gain, as thou hast? If thou hast ambition, why dost not thou allow him also to have the desire of power? If thou hast friends to serve, has not he also some who depend upon him? Dost thou hate him, merely because his wants and his desires are similar to thine own, and because he is, in all respects, a creature like to thyself?

Differences among men arise from real or imaginary injuries, which have been given and received. Let those who Give Offence, and do thereby prevent the current of reciprocal love from flowing, con-

sider that their neighbour may be injured, either in his person, or in his property, or in his character. If a man is injured in any of these respects, the aggressor knows that he does thereby dissolve the ties of friendship between him and the person whom he thus offends. If you hurt your neighbour in his person by wounding him, you are guilty of a very great outrage, and render it difficult to the offended person to forgive. You treat him, not as a man ought to be treated, but as the brutes treat one another. If you do this, to gratify a present fit of anger, or to indulge preconceived malice, every wise and impartial man will condemn you. If you wound your neighbour, to gratify the vanity of showing your superior bodily strength, a horse or a bull has still better reason to be vain, for they are much stronger than you. Consider the dreadful consequences of wounding your neighbour so as to destroy his health, or so as to take away his life. Your neighbour's property, whether it be his own by a natural or by an acquired

quired right, ought to be considered as a thing which you cannot take from him, without transgressing the laws both of God and of man. If you rob, or steal, merely to supply your necessities, would you not act with more wisdom, and with more safety and honour, to tell your case to the humane, who would have compassion upon you, and relieve you? If you do injustice to your neighbour, merely for the sake of creating trouble and vexation to him, or for the sake of indulging a revengeful spirit, remember that God beholds with indignation such deliberate malice and wickedness, and that He will surely punish you, unless you shall immediately repent, and make restitution as far as that shall be in your power. By hurting your neighbour in his character, you wound him in the most tender part. You put him to much grief; and perhaps you thereby take away his bread. Those arrows of evil-speaking which are shot at a man's character, give wounds which are of all others the most painful to the sufferer,

er, and the most difficult to be cured. A man, by losing his good name, is robbed of his all. He loses his importance in society. From being an object of esteem and love, he falls into a state of contempt and aversion. His spirits are sunk and depressed, and, in many cases, his usefulness is destroyed. This is a sore evil which the malicious man bringeth upon his neighbour. Shall the Righteous Judge of the world behold such injustice and cruelty with indifference? Shall the injured man plead in vain with Heaven for redress? No. GOD will surely hear him, and do justice to his injured character. Let the evil-speaker consider, that his guilt is increased both by the greatness of the injury which he hath done, and by the smallness of the temptation which he had to commit it. For, very often, the evil-speaker takes away his neighbour's good name, from no greater temptation than that of indulging the volubility of his tongue. And what has he got by the hurt which he has done to his neighbour, even supposing

posing that it was to gratify his malice or revenge? The pleasure which he thereby receives is none other than that which the accursed spirits enjoy, by gratifying a horrid temper which is its own torment. The evil-speaker, as soon as he is found out, renders himself the object of contempt and hatred; and his own conscience will, one day, be made to smite him with a degree of pain, that shall be as insupportable as that whereby he unjustly destroyed the peace of his neighbour.

By hurting your neighbour in any of the above mentioned respects, you provoke his resentment; and you lose his friendship, which, in many cases, is of more value to you than silver and gold. You lose the benefit and the sweetness of social intercourse with him, and you expose yourself to all the bad effects of his displeasure, and to the hatred of his friends. Are any rewards which you can receive for thus acting contrary to the voice both of natural sentiment and of reason, sufficient to compensate for the loss of your neighbour's friendship and good offices, and for the

the trouble and vexation which, by your own wickedness, you have brought upon yourself?

To those, on the other hand, who have Received Injuries from others, reason gives this Advice. It is far more noble, in every case, to forgive your enemies, than to bear any grudge, or to indulge resentment. Unless the injury which you have received be of such a nature, that a regard to your own character, or that the duty which you owe to your families or to society, calleth upon you to seek redress according to the laws of your country, it is much better to overlook even gross instances of selfishness in others, and of bad treatment which you may have received from them, than to give scope to a spirit of revenge. Even when duty calls upon you to seek redress, from the necessity of protecting your own character, or from a regard to the public good, malice or hatred ought never to mingle with your craving that justice to which you are intitled. The injurious are, in every case, objects of pity, and not

of revenge. By doing injustice to you, they draw down the vengeance of heaven upon themselves. But in all cases of smaller injuries and affronts, it is the voice of reason that you should overlook them. By forgiving and overlooking them, you preserve a friendly intercourse with those, with whom you must live in a state of painful strife, if you seek redress, or if you even seem to resent what you may think unpolite treatment or injustice. By overlooking smaller offences, you allow a kindled spark to be extinguished, which, if it is fanned, will grow into a flame, the whole bad consequences whereof you cannot possibly foresee. Therefore, when you receive an unpolite letter, or when hard words are said to you, or when an indecent message is sent to you, or when a selfish action is done to you, trust not the first view which you take of the injury or affront which you think that you have received; because your own self-love is, in that case, a magnifying glass. Read the letter over again, lest you may have mistaken

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the spirit of it. Reflect that the messenger may have put the message into words of his own. Consider, that he who spoke to you indecently, was perhaps in anger, or that he may have been inebriated, or that some malicious person may have given him a wrong representation of the matter in question. Though he has done a selfish action, yet remember that many others would have done the same thing. In no man is perfection to be found. Perhaps you had said or done something which had irritated him. Perhaps he is sorry for what he has done; and, therefore, forgive him. By shewing him that you overlook his insolence and injustice, you will render him more your friend than ever. He will admire your magnanimity and good temper; and he will be ashamed of his having ever used you ill. Is not the following this course a much wiser thing, than to resent small injuries and affronts; and thereby lay the foundation of the many sore evils which flow from strife and discord? In the case of smaller acts of selfishness and

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injustice, our SAVIOUR has given us this most excellent advice*, "But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: But whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away." How excellent a rule is this! Why, Christians, is it so little followed? Remember that the SON of GOD is himself here speaking to the members of his church.

Moreover, our own reason teaches us, that it is a vain and foolish thing to indulge resentment, and to live in a state of enmity with our neighbours, because human life is short. They and we shall soon quarrel no more. Death will soon put an end to the strife of contending parties. In the grave, the animosities of sects, and the feuds of clans, and

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* Matth. v. 38.

the mutual hatred of individuals, will be buried, as to the disputants themselves, in an eternal rest and silence. Death dissolves our connection with this world; and therefore none do ever return from the grave to renew their vain disputes. "As
"the cloud is consumed, and vanisheth
"away; so he that goeth down to the
"grave, shall come up no more. He shall
"return no more to his house, neither
"shall his place know him any more *."
What now signify all the quarrels and contentions of those who have lived before us? Their vain resentments and disputes are buried with themselves in perpetual forgetfulness. Their past animosities and cruelties can bring them no profit in the grave. There they shall not gratify their revenge, nor take pleasure in feeding on discord, and in shooting the poisoned arrows of malice and evil-speaking. What has happened to them, will soon befall those also who now live in a state of variance with one another. In the grave we shall have

* Job. vii. 9.

have no connection with any of those things about which we now vainly contend; and our common mother, the earth, in whose bosom we shall all soon lie, will take no interest in the disputes of her children. Think, O revengeful, quarrelsome man, what profit or pleasure will the gratification of thy malice and resentment bring thee on the day of thy funeral, and when thy friends, after inclosing thy body in the cold earth, shall bid thee a final farewell! In the grave the unjust man shall not use his tongue of malice to do hurt, nor lift up his arm of cruelty to wound the innocent; and there he who now suffers injustice, shall not hear the false reports of him which the slanderer doth raise, nor shall he there feel the exercise of tyranny. Go to a churchyard, and visit the tombs of those contending parties who lie there in a state of solemn silence and forgetfulness; and if thy heart is capable of being touched, thou wilt there receive a lesson, teaching thee to lay aside all malice and injustice and evil-speaking. "There the wicked cease from

"troubling; and there the weary be at
 "rest. There the prisoners rest together;
 "They hear not the voice of the oppressor.
 "The small and great are there, and the
 "servant is free from his master*."

* Job lii. 17.

CHAP.

C H A P. III

GOD has enforced the Obligations to Brotherly Love by the Authority of the Commands of His Revealed Law.

WE have already shown, that it is the voice both of natural sentiment and of reason, that men ought to love one another. But GOD has not left the observance of this duty to these monitors alone. He has enforced the observance of this sacred law by something which is still more palpable and striking. He has added the solemn authority and the sanctions of His revealed word. In the holy scriptures, we see the great rules of brotherly kindness and charity laid down so plainly, that they cannot be mistaken. Therein we are taught every necessary case of this duty. The authority of GOD's revealed word gives very great additional force to the native principle of benevolence. Natural sentiment and reason have power over the

mind, and prompt men to the exercise of brotherly love, in the calm and tranquil seasons of life, when there are no great temptations to be unjust and unmerciful. But in those trying emergencies, wherein interferences of worldly interest do happen, or when other causes of strife arise, these principles are too often found to be wanting in strength. They yield the government of the mind, too easily, to the influence of prejudice and of malice, or of selfishness and a party-spirit. GOD, who "knoweth our frame, and" who "remembereth that we are dust," saw that we need the assistance and the sanctions of a promulgated law, containing full evidence of Heavenly enactment, to strengthen the natural ties of unity and affection among brethren; and with this additional powerful argument for brotherly love He has graciously favoured us. In His revealed word, GOD utters His voice from heaven in a manner that tends to strike the soul with awe. There we see the Supreme Monarch, who gives law to the armies of
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heaven, and to the inhabitants of the earth, interposing His solemn authority. There we hear that Almighty Governor, whom all the nations of the earth ought to fear, speaking to us from above, and commanding us to love one another, and to refrain from malice and strife, on the pain of His "indignation and wrath." There we hear Him declaring, that he will stretch forth His omnipotent arm to punish the unjust and the unmerciful, and that He will reward the kind and the charitable, and that "the peace-makers shall be called" His "children." Is not this a consideration which ought to overawe the world, and cause men to treat one another properly?"

The sacred scriptures abound with solemn exhortations to observe the duty of brotherly love. Thus GOD said to the Jews *, "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD." Hear our

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* Levit. xix. 18.

SAVIOUR's golden rule of mens just and affectionate treatment of one another * :
“Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would
“that men should do to you, do ye even so
“to them : for this is the law and the pro-
“phets.” And the Apostle Paul thus ex-
horteth us: “Be kindly affectionate one to
“another, with brotherly love, in honour
“preferring one another †.” “Put on
“therefore (as the elect of GOD, holy and
“beloved) bowels of mercy, kindness,
“humbleness of mind, meekness, long-
“suffering, forbearing one another, and
“forgiving one another, if any man have
“a quarrel against any: Even as CHRIST
“forgave you, so also do ye. And above
“all these things, put on charity, which is
“the bond of perfectness. And let the
“peace of GOD rule in your hearts, to the
“which also ye are called in one body §.”

Besides these direct and affirmative com-
mands, by which GOD has enforced the
obligation to the duty of brotherly love,
He has also enjoined obedience to it
by

* Matth. vii. 12.

† Rom. xii. 10.

§ Coloff. iii. 12.

by the most awful threatenings: "Judge
 "not, that ye be not judged. For with
 "what judgment ye judge, ye shall be
 "judged: and with what measure ye mete,
 "it shall be measured to you again*."
 "For, if ye forgive men their trespasses,
 "your Heavenly Father will also forgive
 "you. But if ye forgive not men their
 "trespasses, neither will your Father for-
 "give your trespasses †." "Then came
 "Peter to Him, and said, LORD, how
 "oft shall my brother sin against me, and
 "I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus
 "said unto him, I say not unto thee, un-
 "til seven times, but until seventy times
 "seven ‡." See this command further
 illustrated, and most powerfully enforced,
 in the parable of the king who took ac-
 count of his servants, which you have in
 the subsequent verses of this same chapter.
 Are not such threatenings well fitted to
 touch the consciences of men? Do not
 the uncharitable and the revengeful read

* Mat. vii. 1, 2.

† Mat. vi. 14.

‡ Mat. xviii. 21, 22.

and hear them with trembling? Can the implacable, or those who censure their brethren rashly and uncharitably, be easy in their minds, when they hear God declaring, that, if they shall continue to indulge their unmerciful and unforgiving spirit, He will not forgive them? Is the gratification of malice and revenge a sufficient compensation for a man's losing his own soul?

The example of the LORD JESUS CHRIST gives an additional force to these sacred commands of the Divine Law to love our neighbour. The example of CHRIST is a mixture of precept and of instruction. He having been sent to teach men the "true way" of salvation, His example is to be considered as a command to us to imitate Him, as well as a rule of direction, shewing us how we ought to walk. Therefore, consider well the nature of that example of brotherly kindness and charity which CHRIST has set before us. He loved mankind in a perfect degree. His love to us had not the least grain of alloy. No

par-

particle of selfishness or of revenge was mixed with His love. It was pure and invincible. It led Him to suffer the most grievous things upon our account, and to die for us. No instances of ingratitude could cool the ardour of his affection. No injurious treatment could stop the current of his love. To the most amiable tenderness and sensibility of heart he joined the most active and the most laborious exertions in healing those who had bodily diseases, in preaching the gospel to the poor and the unlearned, and in forming in men that temper and that course of life, which is conducive to their present happiness, and introductory to their final salvation. He has set before us an example of forgiveness which is perfectly great and magnanimous. Such was his sensibility of heart to the distresses of mankind, that he shed tears of sympathy with the afflicted, even in those cases wherein he knew that the cause of their sorrow was soon to be removed. He loved the souls of men most affectionately; and he bewailed the spiritual

ritual miseries and the impending destruction of the thoughtless and the irreclaimable. Them he warmly admonished, and for them he fervently prayed. As he approached near to Jerusalem, and reflected upon its impending destruction, he wept over it, saying, * “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them who are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” He “loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his own blood!” “This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends †.” Did our love to one another resemble, in any moderate degree, that wherewith the LORD JESUS CHRIST hath loved us, then would that golden age of sweet peace and mutual friendship be realized, of which the

* Mat. xxiii. 37.

† John xv. 12, 13.

philosophers dreamed, and of which the poets sung. Then would there be a literal fulfilment of the ancient prophecy of that harmony and gentleness of manners, which were to be characteristic of the Messiah's reign. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.*"

By whose authority are these commands, to love our neighbour, given? Who is He that is speaking to us in these precepts to love one another, and in this bright and affecting example of our LORD JESUS CHRIST? GOD Himself is thereby speaking to us. Can there be a higher authority than this? Can any obligation to the observance of this duty be conceived of a more solemn nature, than that which is constituted by a voice from above, speaking to us in a written mandate, which co-operates with natural sentiment and with the dictates of our own reason, commanding

* If. xi. 6.

ing us to love one another? What authority will be regarded by us, if we shall condemn those laws which Heaven has revealed, for the purpose of increasing our reverence for the duty of brotherly love, and of shewing us more distinctly what it consists in? Dost thou tremble, O man, when an earthly superior threatens, and dost thou run to execute his orders, and yet shall the LORD JEHOVAH call unto thee, and thou wilt not answer Him! Shall He utter His voice, and thou art deaf to what He saith? Shall the Monarch of the Universe be disregarded, when He speaketh? Shall He command, without receiving obedience from His creatures? Are even great men afraid of the frowns of an earthly prince, and shall they, nevertheless, treat with a most shameful and a most impious indifference the laws of Him who made heaven and earth, and to whom all the kings of this world are nothing but dependent subjects? Shall we venture to transgress such plain and obligatory edicts of heaven? Shall we dare to hate, and to injure our

fellow-creatures, in the very face of those strict commands which Almighty God has given us to love, and to do good to, one another? If we do an unjust action to our neighbour, if we speak evil of him without good cause, or if we bear any grudge against him, and wish evil to him in our hearts, the LORD will not hold us guiltless. We are chargeable with the guilt of disobeying one of His sacred laws, which is most important in its nature, and with the tenor of which he has made us fully acquainted. Love to mankind must necessarily be a duty of the greatest importance to our own best interests, and a thing most sacred in the eye of Heaven, since God has made so many solemn laws concerning it, and which He has accompanied with the most awful and affecting sanctions of rewards and punishments.

C H A P.

C H A P. IV.

The Gospel of CHRIST inculcates the Observance of the Duty of Love to Mankind, by Arguments which are New and Strong.

ALL mankind ought to consider themselves as being brethren, because they are all the children of GOD, who is the Supreme Creator and "Father of All." But Christians are brethren in a sense that is new and peculiar. We are the children of GOD through the grace of a peculiar and Heavenly adoption. This is a ground of affectionate brotherhood, which strengthens the natural ties of love to those of our own species. The word, Brother, conveys the idea of mutual and reciprocal affection; and it has always a reference to the parent, who is the source of the relation, and the centre of that reciprocal love. The relation of a brother, our mother's son, has always

always been considered as being a ground of love which is natural and strong. Children of the same family are always supposed, from the principle of natural affection, to live in a state of warm friendship with each other; and every instance of the contrary is esteemed unnatural and base. The parents being the common centre of the children's love and regard, that circumstance, joined with their having lived together in their infancy, and with their having been educated under the same inspection, and with their placing a mutual confidence in the affection of the parents, is, among virtuous children, a tie of affection which is strong and lasting. From this family-relation proceed many sweet emotions of sympathetic joy in the case of the whole, or of any one, receiving the blessings which flow from the smiles of propitious Heaven, and from thence proceed many tender feelings of sympathetic grief on account of reciprocal afflictions and adverse occurrences. The same reasoning holds equally true, in the case of

love subsisting among the children of God in general. He is the Great Original Parent, from whom all mankind sprung. Men are His family, whom He created and preserves, and whom He loves, and over whom He presides as a gracious and kind Father. He is the common centre of the affection and trust of all His children; and no earthly parent can love his family with such a degree of affection, as that wherewith GOD loveth us.

In the case of Christians, they are the children of GOD, or they are brethren, in a sense that is peculiar and most endearing. By a peculiar act of free grace we are GOD's adopted children, or we are made partakers of many glorious privileges, in which the rest of mankind do not share with us. Upon the Christian church peculiar marks of the Divine favour are bestowed. In GOD's great household on earth, Christians hold the foremost rank in respect of honour and of favour. Thus saith St Peter in his General Epistle to the
Chri-

Christian churches *, “ But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him, who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light: who in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God.” Although “ God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation, he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him:” Although He knoweth those, in every age and nation of the world, who are possessed of that candour and simplicity of heart, which would have disposed them to embrace the doctrine of the Gospel, if the evidence of its truth and divine authority had been set before them, and whom, therefore, He will treat according to their integrity of heart, and will graciously make allowance for their want of better information, yet those who enjoy the light of the Gospel, are a people more “ favoured of the LORD.” We have a

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* 1 Peter ii. 9.

more clear and satisfying view of the character and government of GOD. We know the method and the certainty of the Divine forgiveness being promised to be granted to those who repent of their sins. We know the certainty of our receiving the assistance and the comforts of the Holy Ghost; and we enjoy more glorious hopes than others. In proportion to the degree in which the knowledge of true religion is capable of improving and rejoicing the heart, in the same proportion are Christians a people more blessed, and are more highly favoured than the rest of mankind. Since we Christians enjoy such advantages as are fitted to render us a more holy people than others, if we improve these benefits to the purpose of salvation, on earth the LORD will smile upon us with peculiar marks of His favour, and in Heaven He will raise us to the highest seats of glory. For, as in the case of improvement in the spiritual life, so also in the case of exaltation to superior rank and glory in the Heavens, "To him that hath shall
" be

" be given, and he shall have more abundance *."

These more clear discoveries, which the gospel gives of the goodness and mercy of the LORD our GOD, are a proper ground of a more ardent degree of love to Him, and consequently of a greater degree of love to his children. He is the object of reverence and of love and trust, and of all our sweetest and best affections. His parental grace appears to the Christian world, in a light in which no other people ever did, or can, view it. He not only bestows all our temporal mercies, but, by the light of the Christian doctrine, we also behold Him dispensing such spiritual gifts and blessings, as are a firm ground of our consolation and hope. Here we are in a course of trial and discipline, that we may be fitted for worshipping and obeying Him on the earth, and for enjoying Him eternally in the Heavens. Here we are in His school of holiness, and He furnishes us with every necessary means of a spiritual education and of improvement, and He graciously provides what-

G 4

ever

* Mat. xiii. 12.

ever we stand in need of. From this earth He has promised to raise us in due time to the mansions of glory. From this state, which is a mixture of enjoyments and of sufferings, He has promised to bring all the righteous to that glorious world, where their happiness shall be perfect and everlasting. Thus CHRIST comforted his disciples, saying *, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you." God is therefore the centre of all his people's hope and chiefest joy; and from this glorious centre of His childrens affection proceeds a sweet tie of their love to one another. In Him we put our trust, and we depend upon Him for our all. To Him we look for protection and happiness, and for consolation to our children and our friends, as well as to ourselves. He is their guardian and patron as well as ours. He is our God and their God. He is the God of departed souls,

* John xiv, 1, 2,

souls, as well as of those who are still on the earth. From Him the past generations of men do still receive the enjoyment of existence. He still keeps them alive: and the righteous, who have left this world, are with Himself in paradise. Him, therefore, the weeping parent considers as the kind guardian of his departed child, whom his eyes behold no more. By the eye of Christian faith, the affectionate and sorrowful mother views her dear infant, of whom death had deprived her, as being watched over, and graciously treated, by her Father in Heaven. The pious man, whose consort is no more, and the disconsolate widow, who believes in CHRIST, do each receive comfort from the hope of their deceased partner being with GOD. Him the grieved child considers as the GOD and permanent friend of his indulgent parents, whose remains he has laid in the dust. In His presence the living hope to meet again with their departed friends.

In GOD, therefore, the sweetest and the best affections of the hearts of all his people are placed. In Him our hearts do all meet as in
their

their common centre : and He being thus the centric object of our love and trust, we derive from this consideration a strong tie of brotherly union and love. The very exercise of love to God softens the heart, and renders it the more susceptible of the benevolent feelings. Hence one great reason why God has commanded us to pray to Him, and to praise Him, is to soften the heart, that it may become the more susceptible of the tender and benevolent feelings. Our devotional exercises can make no addition either to His glory or to His happiness ; but as they are expressions of our love to Him, the Father of all, so they are engagements to the love of our brethren, who are all His children. His example of goodness to all His children is a strong obligation to their loving one another. Since He takes a gracious interest in all His children, so ought we to be kind to them all, and interested in their condition. If we love Him, we will love all our brethren, for His sake. Love to them is the best evidence of our piety toward him. " He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in
" God,

“God, and God in him.*” When we injure any of our brethren, we do injustice to one who is equally related to GOD with ourselves, and one to whom He is a guardian, and to whom He shews mercy and loving kindness. If we injure one of our fellow-christians, we do injustice to an adopted child of GOD, and a member of the true church. Shall we be proud and insolent, since GOD treats all His children with the most gracious condescension? Shall we be averse from forgiving those, whom He willingly pardons, when they repent? In proportion to the degree in which we Christians are enabled to discern more clearly than others, GOD’s parental goodness and grace, in the same proportion are we bound to love all our brethren with a greater warmth and constancy of affection.

Again, the mutual relation which Christians have to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the Saviour of the world, is a new and a strong additional argument for their loving one another. The relation of discipleship has

* 1 John iv, 16.

has been always considered as being a strong tie of good brotherhood and of kind affection. It is natural for scholars who are taught by the same master, to love one another. The high character and offices of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in which we are all equally interested, the great things which he has done for each of our souls, and the things which he is still doing for us, direct the thoughts of every Christian to him as the channel of our access to God, and as the medium of our obtaining the forgiveness of our sins, and eternal life. He is our divine instructor. He is "the light of the world." By the shedding of his blood, he has sealed the promises which God made to the fathers, and by the prophets. He is our mercy-seat. Through him is published our covenant-relation to God, and the promise of a blessed immortality. He is the Mediator of a covenant which contains the promise of far better things than the temporal blessings of the old covenant; and which, therefore, required only the blood of slain beasts to be *the seal* of its promises. By
his

his rising again from the dead, he gave the first sensible evidence of the resurrection of the body. He has taken possession of the everlasting mansions in our name; and to him is committed the final judgement of the world. In this divine person we Christians profess to believe; and by our faith in him we are a separate and distinct religious sect. We have one Lord, and we have one faith. Our religious creed is the same. We are all the disciples of one Master. Therefore, let us love one another for the sake of our common Master. For the honour of his religion, which is a divine system of charity, let us not hate nor quarrel with one another. For the sake of that blessed state of perfect friendship which is the ground of our best hopes, let us strive to taste the first fruits of it here by our living in harmony together. Hereby shall we be the real disciples of our common LORD, who has taken possession of heaven in our name.

With much earnestness did he wish that his disciples would live together in peace and

and love. He even prayed to his Father, on the evening before he suffered, for the union of his followers *. "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word: That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

From this part of his intercessory prayer, we see that he who knew what is in man, and what is most conducive to our real felicity, considered our love to one another as being both a real benefit to ourselves, and as giving to the world one of the best evidences of that religion having come from God, which is capable of producing this blessed effect in such an eminent degree. Accordingly, the strong mutual friendship which subsisted among the primitive Christians, drew the attention of

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those

* John xvii. 11, 20.

those heathens among whom they lived, and extorted applause from them. "Behold," said they, "how these Christians love one another." Our SAVIOUR himself has told us, that brotherly love is the very badge, or the most eminent distinction, of our Christian character. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another*."

Besides those intreaties and commands which our SAVIOUR has used, with a view to make us love one another, he has urged the necessity and the importance of observing this duty, by arguments which are quite peculiar to his religion. That he might shew us, that true benevolence of soul is one of the best means of securing his friendship, he has said, that, if we shall do any act of kindness, however small, to our brethren, from the consideration of their being his disciples, he will consider that good office as being done to himself. "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones,

* John xiii. 35.

“ ones, a cup of cold water only, in the
“ name of a disciple, verily, I say unto
“ you, he shall in no wise lose his re-
“ ward *.” In like manner, in his de-
scription of the Last Judgment he repre-
sents a kind and merciful temper as being
the ground of mens best plea, when they
stand before his tribunal; and he repre-
sents a cruel and unmerciful disposition as
being that which will be one chief cause
of the condemnation of the wicked.
“ When the Son of man shall come in his
“ glory, and all the holy angels with him,
“ then shall he sit upon the throne of his
“ glory. And before him shall be gather-
“ ed all nations; and he shall separate
“ them from one another, as a shepherd
“ divideth his sheep from the goats; and
“ he shall set the sheep on his right hand,
“ but the goats on the left. Then shall
“ the King say unto them on his right
“ hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father,
“ inherit the kingdom prepared for you
“ from the foundation of the world. For

* Mat. x. 42.

" I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat:
" I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink:
" I was a stranger, and ye took me in:
" Naked, and ye cloathed me: I was sick,
" and ye visited me: I was in prison,
" and ye came unto me. Then shall the
" righteous answer him, saying, Lord,
" when saw we thee an hungred, and fed
" thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?
" When saw we thee a stranger, and took
" thee in? or naked, and cloathed thee?
" Or when saw we thee sick or in prison,
" and came unto thee? And the King
" shall answer, and say unto them, Verily
" I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have
" done it unto one of the least of these my
" brethren, ye have done it unto me.
" Then shall he say also unto them on the
" left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed,
" into everlasting fire, prepared for the
" devil and his angels. For I was an
" hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I
" was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:
" I was a stranger, and ye took me not in:
" Naked, and ye clothed me not: Sick,
H " and

“ and in prison, and ye visited me not.
“ Then shall they also answer him, saying,
“ Lord, when we saw we thee an hungred,
“ or athirst; or a stranger, or naked, or sick,
“ or in prison, and did not minister unto
“ thee? Then shall he answer them, say-
“ ing, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch
“ as ye did it not to one of the least of
“ these, ye did it not to me. And these
“ shall go away into everlasting punish-
“ ment: but the righteous into life eter-
“ nal *.” In these passages of sacred Scrip-
ture, taken from the mouth of our SA-
VIOUR himself, do we not see arguments
for the exercise of brotherly love; which
are of mighty force? Do we not see some-
thing here, which speaks most powerfully
to the heart? They are words which must
have a pleasant sound in the ears of the
humane and the charitable; but they must
be a voice of terror to the unmerciful and
the unjust. They must touch most sen-
sibly every one who believes in a future
reckoning with God. The Divine In-
structor

* Mat. xxv. 31.—46.

structor and Judge of the world is here telling us, that our salvation itself depends upon the exercise of a merciful spirit.

But there is, in the above-quoted passages, an argument for brotherly love, which must touch the soul of every believer with a peculiar degree of force. The very mention of it melts the soul into tenderness. By doing merciful acts to your fellow-christians, from the consideration of their being the disciples of the LORD JESUS, and holding the same relation to him in which ye stand, ye shew him kindness and affectionate regards. He is absent from you in respect of his bodily presence; and, therefore, ye cannot entertain him at your house, as Lazarus did, nor can ye shew him any act of personal kindness. He needs not your friendship, nor any of your beneficent actions. But are ye not glad to know, that ye can still shew him friendship and mercy in the person of his disciples, who have need of your charity and compassion? By loving them, and by doing them good, ye shew kind-

ness and love to their LORD and your LORD, to their SAVIOUR and your SAVIOUR. Dost thou pretend to be a Christian, and yet dost not feel the force of this motive to be kind and merciful to those, especially, who have the same relation which thou hast to the SON of GOD? If this argument was seen in its proper light, and if it was considered with that degree of attention which it deserves, it is of itself sufficient to unite the affections of all those who call themselves by the same Christian name, and to make them uniformly treat one another with kindness and brotherly love. Therefore, hear this argument, all ye masters, that those who serve you, may no longer have any just reason to complain of your treating them with a harsh and an unmerciful spirit. Hear it, all ye who are set over apprentices and workmen, that ye may not be hard and unmerciful task-masters. Hear it, all ye who govern a family, that no member thereof may be made unhappy by your bad temper, and by your overbearing

bearing spirit. Hear it, all ye proprietors of houses and lands, that injustice and oppression may be put far from you; and that the industrious may reap a just proportion of the fruit of their labours. Hear it, all ye who preside over hospitals and prisons, that the unhappy persons who are shut up therein, may be more humanely treated than they commonly are, and more attentively considered in the light of being our fellow-creatures. Hear it, ye generals of armies, and ye admirals of fleets, that no influence of a party-spirit, nor effeminacy and want of courage, nor avarice and want of attention to the health and welfare of those whom ye command, and who get you your fame, and your victories, may cause you to throw away the lives of your fellow-creatures, for whom mercy pleads, and whom the principle of brotherly love ought to impel you to take every necessary precaution to save. If ye are possessed of the principle of benevolence, ye will take good care of their health and morals, and ye

will look well to every circumstance of their state. Hear it, all ye governors of islands and provinces. To you I speak with the seriousness and with the friendship of one, who is much concerned for the happiness of his fellow-creatures, and for the salvation of your souls. If ye govern with mercy, and give righteous judgment, many will have reason to bless you on earth ; and great will be your reward in a future state. But if ye are guilty of extortions, and if ye are cruel and oppressive to those under your government, terrible will be your doom, when God shall come to reckon with you ! The wealth which you have accumulated, by a most unjust and cruel exercise of government, will stand you in no stead, when CHRIST “ shall be seen coming in the clouds of “ Heaven, in power and great glory, and “ all the holy angels with him,” to sit in judgment upon the unrighteous and the unmerciful. Therefore, instead of oppressing those whom you are appointed to govern, look humanely into the state of the
poorest

poorest and meanest who dwell in the provinces over which you preside. Hear it, ye ministers of religion, who watch over the souls of others, which are of greater value than the whole world. Hear it, all ye Kings, on the wisdom and mercy of whose reign the happiness of so many thousands of your fellow-creatures depends.

Besides the motives to brotherly love, which we derive from the example and precepts of CHRIST, there is something in the very nature of his whole doctrine, which is most wisely and most graciously calculated to promote a temper of love and of friendship among all his followers. Thus the doctrine of his being the "propitiation for our sins," or that of his death being a declaration of divine mercy to the penitent, is a strong argument for the exercise of mutual love. Every one of your fellow-creatures is, in a certain degree, ennobled by the circumstance of CHRIST having died for him. For the poorest and the meanest he shed his precious

blood. Is not this a strong argument for your not doing hurt to any of your fellow-creatures, since they are of so much value in the eye of Heaven! Have you not a strong reason for loving them, and for treating them with kindness and with much respect, since CHRIST loved them, and even died for them! This is the very argument which St Paul uses for our not giving offence to any of our brethren, even in matters of indifference. Thus, in the case of taking certain kinds of meat, from which some judaizing Christians, through weakness and superstition, imagined that their fellow-Christians ought to abstain, that great and venerable apostle of the Gentiles said to those who were better informed, and did eat those meats, "But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died *." Again, "And thro' thy knowledge, shall the weak brother perish," that is, take offence at the Christian

* Rom. xiv. 15.

stian religion, "for whom Christ died †!" Even with the Holy Sacrament of the Supper, which is designed to be the solemn commemoration of his death, CHRIST has adduced a powerful argument for the mutual love of his followers. In this holy ordinance there is a sweet communion of the saints. Therein they have a spiritual fellowship with one another. In the religious act of communicating an agreeable equality prevails among all the different ranks and orders of Christians. There the high and the low, the rich and the poor sit together as friends and brethren, and as mutual sharers in the blessings of the covenant of grace. At his holy table, and in his presence, his disciples sit together in a happy state of spiritual union; and every communicant makes profession of his heart being full of love to all his brethren. All confess that malice is inconsistent with the right performance of this sacred duty. He wants the garment suitable to the sacred feast, who feels not sincere love to his fellow-christians.

† 1 Cor. viii. 11.

christians. The great apostle Paul has remarked this argument for brotherly love; and he has *urged the* obligation of it. "The
" cup of blessing which we bless, is it not
" the communion of the blood of Christ?
" The bread which we break, is it not the
" communion of the body of Christ? For
" we being many are one bread, and one
" body, for we are all partakers of that
" one bread *."

Moreover, we Christians have a powerful motive to love one another, from the consideration of our mutual hopes. By profession and hope we are citizens of the New Jerusalem. We are invited, by the grace of the new covenant, to dwell in heaven. Thither we all profess to bend our course. There we hope to dwell for ever. To the enjoyment of that incorruptible inheritance, to the hope of which we are begotten through the resurrection of CHRIST from the dead, we all profess to aspire. On the blessed coast, where angels and "the
" spirits of just men made perfect" have
their

* 1 Cor. x. 16.

their dwelling, we all hope soon to arrive. From this state of disappointments and of cares and grief, we hope to be carried soon to that "rest which remaineth to the people of God." In every age, and in the case of the heathens as well as of Christians, those who are cotemporaries may be said to be fellow-travellers to the future invisible state. But the unenlightened nations know not so well as we whither they are going. The bulk of them are, and always have been, in a state of great uncertainty whether there be another life after this, and many of them deny the reality of it altogether. But we know the certainty of a future state; "For CHRIST hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light." We know that, at the death of the body, the soul returns to God, and, in the case of the righteous, is placed in a state of happiness which is perfect and everlasting. Hear the argument by which our SAVIOUR proved to the Sadducees the certainty of a resurrection and of a future state: "But as touching the resurrection
" of

“of the dead, have ye not read that which
“was spoken unto you by God, saying, I
“am the God of Abraham, and the God
“of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God
“is not the God of the dead, but of the
“living*.” Again, “Blessed be the God
“and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who
“according to His abundant mercy, hath
“begotten us again unto a lively hope, by
“the resurrection of Christ from the dead,
“to an inheritance incorruptible, and un-
“defiled, and that fadeth not away, reser-
“ved in heaven for you, who are kept by
“the power of God, through faith unto
“salvation, ready to be revealed in the last
“time*.” In that future state of happi-
ness to which the righteous shall be raised,
they shall behold God in all His original
glory, and they shall be where CHRIST is.
They shall be associated with the worthy
and the benevolent of every age; with all
those who have “come from the east and
“from the west, and from the north and
from

* Mat. xxii. 31.

† 1 Pet. i. 3.—5.

"from the south, and" have "*sat* down in
"the kingdom of God."

Therefore, though in respect of a future state, even we Christians "now see through
"a glass darkly," and now "know but in
"part," yet so much is revealed to us as is
both a sure ground of our hope, and a
strong argument for the exercise of brotherly love. Heaven is the region of perfect peace and harmony. There malice and strife are things quite unknown. There no unjust or malicious person is allowed to take up his abode. No tale-bearer, no back-biter or slanderer is there. From the happy society of pure and benevolent spirits, whose hearts are cemented by eternal Love, the disturbers of the repose of mankind will be for ever excluded. The malicious and the revengeful have no right to aspire to the happy mansions of indissoluble friendship. "There shall in nowise enter
"into it any thing that defileth, neither
"whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they who are written in
"the

"the Lamb's book of life*." Can any argument be stronger than this for the exercise of mutual love? This temper is indispensably necessary to our having the smallest ray of hope, respecting the welfare of the soul after death. Without the temper of good-will to all our brethren, we can lay claim to none of the promises of the Gospel. He who offends in this one point, frustrates, with respect to himself, the whole gracious design of the Christian dispensation. But he who lives in the temper of sincere love to mankind, flowing from faith in the Gospel and in its promises, is preparing himself for associating with those happy spirits above, among whom the voice of discord shall never be heard.

From this pleasing view of a future state which the gospel gives, we also learn that the friendships of good men will be everlasting. The sweetness of the mutual friendships of the righteous is not limited to this present life. Their friendships are only begun here. They will meet again in heaven,

* Rev. xxi. 27.

heaven, and will there renew their brotherly affection, the joys of which will not be there allayed, as it is often here, by the pain of reciprocal sympathy with each other's sufferings, and by the grief of a separation. There wonted friends and kinsmen will recognise each other; and they will never part again. Their mutual love will continue; and it will be still improving in the sweetness of greater perfection through endless ages. Let the weeping parent and the disconsolate widow think of this, and be comforted. "But I
" would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep,
" that ye sorrow not, even as others who have
" no hope." If we had a sufficient degree of faith in the blessed discoveries which the gospel has made to us, "light would arise
" in darkness," and our sorrows would be much fewer, and more easily borne, than we commonly find them to be. If we understood the nature of our holy religion, so as to feel the true spirit of it, we would not allow the trifling interests of this world,
and

and those pitiful grounds of dispute, which often set men at variance with one another, to extinguish, or even to cool, the natural and pleasing flame of brotherly kindness. What are we here but "pilgrims and "strangers, as all our fathers were?" "—This life is only a preparation for a more happy and a more exalted state of being. We are fellow-travellers to the regions of everlasting harmony and glory. During the course of our journey, we have much need of each other's good counsel and friendship and assistance. Therefore, "let "us not fall out by the way." Our journey will soon be finished; and therefore the grounds of present strife will quickly be removed. Every cause of difference, which occurs during this life's pilgrimage, will, as to us, very soon cease. Therefore, let us be kind and merciful to all our fellow-travellers; for they and we must soon part. Have compassion on all those who are ready to faint by the way. Lighten the heavy burthen; and raise up those who are bowed down. Endeavour to bring
back

back those who are straying from the right path; and help forward every brother and sister in their way to Zion. When you and they meet there, the good offices which ye have done to your fellow-travellers will meet with a most grateful return. They will receive a great reward in heaven. The gracious Father of mankind doth dearly love all those that are kind to their brethren, who travel along with them through this probationary state: and he will raise them to high seats of glory in His eternal kingdom. "They that be wise shall shine "as the brightness of the firmament, and "they that turn many to righteousness, as "the stars for ever and ever *." The departed friends and brethren of those whom they have thus benefited, and patronized, will receive them with loud acclamations as soon as they enter into the mansions of paradise.

* Dan. 12. 3.

B O O K I.

On the Manner in which BROTHERLY
LOVE ought to be EXPRESSED.

C H A P. I.

*We ought to Love others with the same kind of
Affection with which we Love ourselves.*

“**T**HOU shalt love thy neighbour as
thyself,” saith our SAVIOUR. By
this precept he does not mean that we
should love others with the same degree of
affection with which we love ourselves. This
is inconsistent with that original nature
which God has bestowed upon man. To
love our neighbour with the same degree
of affection with which we love ourselves,
is, in most cases, a thing impossible, and
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would, in its operation, be very hurtful to that gracious and beautiful constitution of things, in every part of which the infinite wisdom and goodness of the Supreme Creator are strikingly apparent. The natural affection of parents is often indeed so strong, that they forget what they owe to their own preservation, from unconquerable love to their children, and from a desire, which swallows up all reflection, of saving them in the time of their sickness, and of providing for them when they are in want. Many an amiable and worthy mother has sacrificed her own life, to preserve the life of her sick child. In those cases also, of which there are a few instances recorded in ancient history, wherein the life of some thousands, or the saving of an empire, depends upon a man's voluntarily submitting to die, a sense of propriety and the dread of blame co-operate with the principle of benevolence in disposing him to prefer the life of others to his own. But these are not general rules by which mankind are to be directed, because the demand for such
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instances of great self-denial and generosity is but rare, and without the limits of what ordinarily occurs in human life, or of what is required of man. Self-love makes a very essential part of human nature; and it is implanted in man for very wise and needful purposes. By its instinctive impulse we fly from danger, and we provide for our safety, and we pursue with eagerness those objects which we think are of importance to our happiness. But as it is the strongest of all our natural principles, it is in great danger of degenerating into selfishness, which is its criminal extreme. Nature impels us, and the written law of God allows us, to prefer the preservation of our own life to that of others, and to provide for ourselves and for our own families in the first place. It is also natural and allowable to have a stronger attachment to our own good name, and to our own salvation, than what we can feel for others in these respects. It is natural and lawful to feel more strongly for our own losses and sufferings, than for those of other

men. It is also allowable to exult more on account of our own prosperity, than on account of the good fortune of others. Neither is it required, that we should give away our whole estate, and reduce ourselves to a state of beggary, that we may provide for the indigent, or that we should expose ourselves to irreparable infamy to save the character of our neighbour, or that, in any case, we should reduce ourselves to a state of wretchedness and misery, for the sake of procuring happiness to others. These are not the things which are implied in the duty of loving our neighbour as ourselves. But although in most cases we cannot love others with the same degree of affection with which we love ourselves, yet we ought to love them with the same kind of affection which we feel for ourselves, or we must do to them as we wish them to do to us. Therefore, in the gratification of our self-love, or in the pursuit of our own profit and pleasures, we must always beware of encroaching upon the rights of other men. We must always keep

keep within the limits of justice and mercy. We must not juggle our neighbour in pursuing what we wish to obtain. We must not put him to pain for the sake of procuring to ourselves pleasure. We must not enrich ourselves at the expence of making him poor. We must not save our own character by robbing him of his good name, nor preserve our own life by taking his away unjustly. In gratifying the natural principle of self-love, there is one path in which we must always keep, which is that of inoffensiveness. "Be blameless, "and harmless, the sons of God, without "rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and "perverse nation, among whom ye shine "as lights in the world *."

In order to love our neighbour as ourselves, it is not sufficient that we refrain from hurting him in any case wherein his interest or his rights are concerned; for that is only a negative virtue. We must wish well to him in our hearts; and we must exert ourselves in doing him good.

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* Philip. ii. 15.

Whatever we wish and expect that others should do to us, that ought always to be the rule of our judgment in determining what we ought to do to them. Do ye wish and expect that your neighbour should be at pains to preserve your health, or that he should put himself to some trouble and expence to save your life when it is in danger, so ought ye to put yourselves to inconvenience and expence to save the health or the life of others. Do ye wish that your neighbour should willingly accommodate you and your family in such things as ye stand in need of, be ye also always ready to serve him, when he asks your friendship in what is lawful and dutiful in you to do. Do ye wish that your neighbour would assist you in executing your plans of wealth and power, do ye also assist him in his lawful endeavours to acquire riches and aggrandizement. Do ye wish to preserve your good character, and to escape the arrows of evil-speaking, be ye also tender of your neighbour's good name, and always speak and judge charitably.

ritably. Do ye wish others to be moved with compassion for your misfortunes, do ye also have pity on those who are in distress. Do you wish others to receive pleasure from seeing you prosperous, do ye also rejoice at their success, and never envy their good fortune. A mutuality of kindness and of good offices is essentially necessary to the existence of reciprocal love. How can you expect that your neighbour should always be willing to serve you in your need, when you refuse to grant him such favours as he has a right to ask, and which you have it in your power to bestow?

A selfish spirit is destructive of reciprocal love. Self-love being only that natural and lawful preference which we give to ourselves above others, in cases wherein we injure no body else by that preference, it is perfectly consistent with a right behaviour to our fellow-men. But selfishness, which signifies attention to one's own interest only, without any regard to others, is incompatible with the real love

of mankind. A selfish man wishes to take every thing, and to give away nothing. He grasps at every advantage and every convenience, but he never consults his neighbour's profit or accommodation. He borrows, but he will not lend. He scruples not to put you to much trouble to serve his interest, but he will put himself to no inconvenience to oblige you. He will do you injustice, to gratify his own avarice and ambition; and yet he will complain of you, even when you do nothing more than take lawful measures to prevent his encroaching upon your rights. Such a spirit as this is quite repugnant to the principle of love to our neighbour. It is the bane of true friendship. True benevolence is a stranger to that heart wherein it dwells; and it has a direct tendency to extinguish love in the hearts of other men. A reciprocity of kind affection and of good offices and of gratitude is indispensably necessary to the existence of brotherly love.

The love which we owe to mankind is
such

such as is sincere, and flows from the heart. Without this the outward expressions of it are mere forms of hypocrisy, which neither contain the principle, nor yield the pleasures, of true friendship. In a polished and well governed state of society, mens professions of friendship are in danger of being less sincere, than they are in a more rude age. In a polished age, men are obliged, from a regard to the better executed laws, and in compliance with the established rules of good breeding, to put on the semblance of friendship and good-will, whether it be the offspring of genuine love or not. Attention to courteous manners comes at last to form a system of exterior politeness, which is a mere counterfeit of genuine love. A studied civility assumes the name, without either the principle, or the sweetness, of true benevolence. Formal salutations, and ceremonious visits, and a kind of frivolous intercourse in which the heart has no concern, constitute the friendships of the bulk of mankind. Their behaviour

is clothed in the borrowed dress of friendship, and they speak with its assumed tongue. There is much more of artifice than of real nature and sincerity in their pretensions to kindness and mutual love. But the disguise is so well carried on, that the artless and the unexperienced are often unable to penetrate through it. Courtiers, and those who are accustomed to such false arts of hypocritical refinement, are not imposed upon by a mask which is now so commonly worn; but the young, and those of honesty and simplicity of heart, are often deceived and wounded by it. For, under the caresses of dissembled affection, malice and injustice and treachery do often lie concealed. But this false semblance of friendship being destitute of the principle of true love, it is not fit to encounter that interference of interest, and those competitions for power and pleasure and fame, which occur in the circle of life; and therefore the flimsy veil is torn by the very first trial of its strength. Whenever differences
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in opinion or interest arise, the unsubdued malice or selfishness of the heart does then disclose itself. Those jealousies which were some time concealed under the mask of pretended kindness, but which were secretly working, do then break out into open strife. From thus substituting a dissembled affection in the room of sincere love, you often see those who were lately pretended friends, become, on a sudden, inveterate enemies to one another. Hence, among even those who pretend to much sanctity, dissensions often prevail; and differences in opinion produce alienation of heart. Sometimes among those of the same family suspicions arise; and their love, because it is not sincere, either waxes cold or degenerates into enmity. Therefore, dissembled affection, however strongly and systematically it may be recommended by some, ought to be reprobated as an enemy to friendship and to virtue in general. It is even one of the causes of the decay of pure and undefiled religion, as well as an enemy to brotherly love. Deceit,

ceit in friendship, like hypocrisy in religion, corrupts the heart; and communicates its vile taint to the very seat of the soul, and infects all its powers. It is a thing repugnant to a profitable reading or hearing of the doctrine of CHRIST. It is just the reverse of that candor and simplicity of soul, which form the "good ground," in which the spiritual seed of his word takes root, and springs, and becomes fruitful. Candor of mind begets humility and teachableness and an honest openness to conviction of the truth; and therefore on the honest soul the Divine Blessing always rests, and on it the doctrine of CHRIST makes a strong impression. This is the reason why our SAVIOUR did so highly commend Nathaniel and some others, who were possessed of real candor and honesty of soul. His love to simplicity and honesty of heart made him often exhort his disciples to imitate little children, because they are strangers to guile and deceit. "Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children,

" children,

“children, ye shall not enter into the
“kingdom of heaven *.” “But JESUS
“said, Suffer little children, and forbid
“them not to come unto me: for of such
“is the kingdom of heaven †.”

There must be a permanent principle of undissembled affection in the heart, without which we cannot love our brethren as ourselves, or in the way in which that voice which speaks to the Christian world from above, has commanded us to love them. We must be possessed of that pure and undisguised principle of benevolence, which shall make us always wish well to mankind, and which shall prompt us to take a real interest in the good and bad fortune of others. Our affection to our fellow-creatures must not consist in occasional glows of compassion, or in transient fits of kindness. Even in the unjust and unmerciful, these uncertain and vanishing symptoms of benevolence may sometimes be seen. True love, like an inseparable quality, always remains with the benevolent

* Mat. xviii. 3.

† Mat. xix. 14.

lent heart. Being strengthened by Christian faith, and being improved by exercise, it becomes a leading principle of conduct, and shows itself in every one of those occurrences, wherein our behaviour has a respect to our fellow-men. Injuries may cool its ardor, and temptations may abate its strength; but, if it is genuine, it will always keep a man from doing any unjust thing to others, and it will impel him to do good even to his enemies. It keeps anger from lasting long; and revenge doth not dwell with it. It leads a man to do acts of kindness which are quite disinterested. It makes him do good to those who cannot repay him. The benevolent man gives without hoping to receive again. This is that true goodness of heart which God commends. "God loveth a cheerful giver*." Soft answers to wrathful expressions, and gentle manners, are the natural fruits of pure and undissembled love to mankind. Mildness of temper, affability to all men, and a native proneness

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* 2 Cor. ix. 7.

to oblige, are the true language of brotherly love. They are at once its fruits and its natural expressions. Wherever its sweet voice is heard, it captivates the hearts of others, and it begets a similar temper in them. The sight and the experience of its genuine courtesy of manners, have a powerful influence in engaging others to become mild and affectionate. Love begets love. Hence pride and insolence and rusticity of manners are not only a proof of the want of pure affection in him from whom they come, but they are also such qualities as tend to create disgust, and to beget resentment; and to weaken the power of the kind affections in those who observe them, and feel their bad effects. The more mild and polished that our behaviour toward each other is, provided it be undissembled and flows from the heart, the more agreeable do we become to one another, and the more strong is the cement of our mutual affection. An affable and condescending behaviour is the natural language of affection: and when

this courteous and engaging address comes from superiors, it renders their inferiors easy and happy in their company, and it makes all ranks and orders of men associate together with easiness of conversation, and with the polite freedom of brothers and friends.

It ought to be considered with how little trouble, and at how small an expence, one man may often do much good to another. Occasions often occur, wherein a friendly word spoken in season, or a short epistle wrote with a benevolent spirit, may be the mean of essentially benefiting thy neighbour. Therefore, if the young man setting out in business needs thy assistance, do not deny it. If the young man of genius has neither money nor friends, use thy kind endeavours to help forward his education. If a poor man, with a numerous family, needs a place, endeavour to get him a piece of bread. Seest thou a man modest in company, keep him in countenance by accommodating thyself to his diffidence. Is there one that is in pain
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from the consciousness of his inferiority to those with whom he is assembled, take kind notice of him, that he may not feel the painful weight of his comparative insignificance. The fruit of such benevolence is peace and honour and solid hope.

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CHAP.

C H A P. II.

A Superior Degree of our Love is due to Good Men.

IT has been observed already, that all mankind are the objects of our love. The obligation of this duty, altho' it admits of various degrees, is universal in respect of its extent. The principle of Benevolence, in its operation, implies the desire of doing good to all mankind, even to those who are our enemies and persecutors. As we pray for our own prosperity and salvation, so we ought to pray for all men, and to bless even those who curse us. This is a doctrine which was but ill understood, and but little practised, before the commencement of the Christian æra. The heathens universally believed that the law of retaliation might, in all cases, be observed with innocence. They set no bounds to their revenge. The Jews confined their kindness

ness of heart and their good offices to their own kindred, and to those of their own nation. Because GOD had forbidden them by His laws, to have familiar intercourse with the idolatrous nations among whom they lived, and because they were enjoined not to make peace with Amalek; and the seven nations of Canaan, whom GOD had devoted to destruction on account of their profane worship of idols and gross immoralities, they foolishly considered themselves as being discharged from the obligation of kindness and love to the rest of mankind in general. But this error arose from national pride, and from a false idea of their being the only people on earth whom Heaven regarded, and from their not consulting the natural dictates of the heart which are the law of GOD within every man, and from their culpable ignorance of what their own promulgated law had enjoined. Our SAVIOUR has restored the great law of charity and love to its natural and original extent. He has taught us to consider every man, because he is a

man, or because he is of the same nature with ourselves, as being the proper object of our affection and compassion. To convince us that we can, on no account whatever, be discharged from the obligation to love, and to do good to, every one as we have abilities and opportunity, he has commanded us to love and to pray for even our greatest enemies. “Ye have heard
“ that it hath been said, Thou shalt love
“ thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy:
“ But I say unto you, Love your enemies,
“ bless them that curse you, do good to
“ them that hate you, and pray for them
“ who despitefully use you and persecute
“ you: that ye may be the children of
“ your Father who is in Heaven; for He
“ maketh His sun to rise on the evil and
“ on the good, and sendeth rain on the
“ just and the unjust *.”

But though we are thus bound to love all men, so as to refrain from being cruel and unjust to any one, and so as to do good to all men, as we have abilities and
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* Mat. v. 43—45.

opportunity, a superior degree of our love is, nevertheless, due to good men. They are more worthy than others. They are the excellent ones of the "earth." Nature itself teaches us, that they deserve a greater warmth of our affection than others. The heart naturally feels a proneness to love them more than the wicked. If, in the case of even brute creatures and inanimate objects, we value them in proportion to their real or supposed excellence, how much more, in the case of men, are those intitled to the chief place in our esteem and affection, who are the most eminent for sincere piety and steadfast virtue, which are qualities that chiefly render one man more excellent than another. In the estimation of Heaven and of our own reason, the good man is more amiable and more noble than others. He holds a superior rank to others in the scale of moral importance and worth. He is more excellent than others in respect of his heart, and in respect of the degree of his favour with God, and in respect of

his hopes. "The righteous," saith Solomon, "is more excellent than his neighbour*." His soul is more pure. His mind, which is the man, is adorned with such virtues as render him truly great and honourable. Piety and virtue are the bright and unfading ornaments of man. They are the garments which no moth can corrupt. They are flowers which do not fade. They are a treasure which no thief can steal. The good man's being in superior favour with God, and his right of citizenship in Heaven, are circumstances which give him a pre-eminence of worth and of true greatness. By these he is rendered truly honourable. His piety toward God, and the justice and integrity of his conduct in his commerce with the world, and the pure rectitude of his whole life, give him a natural and just claim to the greatest ardor of our love. But our own native feelings point him out as the proper object of superior affection; and this preference is authorised by the example of CHRIST.

He
* Prov. xii. 26.

He loved John more than the rest of his apostles. GOD extends His goodness to all men, even to "the evil and the unthankful;" but the righteous are the objects of His special regard. Upon them He bestows peculiar blessings and marks of His favour, and to them He opens sources of consolation and joy, which He withholds from others. "For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; His countenance doth behold the upright*." That superior love which GOD has to good men, is a competent reason why we ought to regard them with a superior degree of affection. They who do not love the righteous more than others, show that they have not a proper discernment of true excellence, and that they have not a sufficient degree of zeal for the interests of virtue. By honouring good men, you encourage them, and by encouraging them you promote their usefulness. In proportion to the degree of countenance which you give to them, in the same proportion

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* Prov. xi. 7.

do you patronize virtue, and do good to the world. By countenancing good men, you bring merit into esteem, and crown it with deserved honour. In no way can you more effectually promote truth and righteousness among men, than by patronizing the virtuous. You do hereby give full scope to their usefulness, and encourage them to exhibit, in all its brightness and extent, that fair example of worth, by which others are enlightened and directed. By making a difference between the righteous and the wicked, in the distribution of your esteem and affection, you do nothing more than what strict justice requires, and you only observe a difference which God Himself doth make. By hating and persecuting good men, you offend God, who loveth and honoureth them, and you do hurt to the best interests of society. You thereby give the wicked an opportunity of triumphing, and you discourage those who set examples of worth. Always make a distinction betwixt real and apparent good, betwixt those qualities of
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the mind which are inherent, and which are of intrinsic and immortal worth, and those qualities which are merely external and adventitious and transitory. In every assembly give to the good man that superior honour which is his due; and in conferring any office of power and responsibility, if he is, in other respects, equally qualified to discharge the duties of it, always give him the preference. You are safe in his hands. His integrity will prevent injustice and oppression, and his zeal for the public good will render him faithful to his trust. "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn*."

But it may be asked, Ought we not to love wicked men, as well as the pious and the good? We are certainly bound to love even wicked men, because they are our fellow-creatures, and because God is good and gracious even to them. We ought to have compassion for their misfortunes and suf-

* Prov. xxix. 2.

sufferings, and we ought to relieve them when they are in want. But, since vice is the natural object of aversion and hatred, how, it may be said, can we love those who are guilty of deliberate and habitual wickedness? The distinction betwixt love to a wicked man, and hatred to his wickedness, may seem, at first sight, to be somewhat nice, because both virtue and vice have their seat in the mind, which is the man himself. But the difficulty vanishes, when it is considered, that the love which we owe to a wicked man is not a love of esteem, but a love of compassion. He is a real object of our pity. Every merciful and considerate man is led to view him with an eye of commiseration. His sins have estranged the LORD from him, so that he is vile in the Divine estimation, and his very prayers are turned into sin. Upon him the LORD looks with disapprobation; and He is angry with him every day. To him none of the promises of religion do belong. His way is the way of death; and without repentance he has no hope.

hope. As soon as he is persuaded to look either into the book of his own conscience, or into the revealed law of God, in either of them he reads his awful doom. Is not such a man the object of pity in the considerate eye of reason? Do not all the tender feelings of the heart point him out as an object of our greatest compassion? His thoughtless mirth, like that of the madman, who laughs and sings, because he knows not his hapless state, can excite no sympathetic gladness in the hearts of the wise and the humane. In them his joy begets gloom and melancholy. Can we join in the revels and loose merriment of one who stands on the very brink of a dangerous precipice, or below whose feet the destructive mine is advancing? "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape *." Though this passage, in its original design, is applicable to the effects of CHRIST's coming to judge-

* 1 Thess. v. 3.

judgment, yet it may be applied to the state of the thoughtless and impenitent in every period of the world. "How oft is the candle of the wicked put out? And how oft cometh their destruction upon them? God distributeth sorrows in his anger. They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away †." Since over the head of the wicked man hangs the wrath of GOD and impending destruction, we surely ought to pity him, and strive to reclaim him from the error of his ways. This love of pity strongly interests the pious and humane for the deplorable state of the wicked man. While they hate his vices, they are much concerned for his soul. It is in this sense that we are bound to love the wicked.

But still it may be said, Does not GOD hate the wicked; and how, therefore, can it be lawful for us, in any degree, to love those whom He hates? GOD is said to hate wicked men, because He hates their sins: and unless they shall repent, He will

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also

* Job xxi. 17.

also surely punish them with an everlasting destruction. But still He is concerned for their souls. He remonstrates with them. He urges, and commands, and entreats them to repent. His language to them is paternal. He speaks to them, saying, "Why will ye die?" His love to them is like that of the father of a profligate son, with whom he is angry, and whom he chastises, but in whose reformation he still takes an interest, with the feelings of a parent. If they repent, He will forgive them. Thus he said to his ancient people of Israel *, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." He loves them not with a love of esteem and approbation, but with a love of compassion. Herein let us imitate Him. And the greater the interest is that we take in their repentance and salvation, the stronger will our love of compassion

* Isaiah lv. 7.

for them become. Our desire of saving them will gradually increase; whereby our love to them will also grow in strength. Thus the mother's fondness is increased, the longer and the more watchfully that she is obliged to tend her weak and sickly child. Pity, which is an important branch of love, partakes the more of its parent-principle, the more that it is exercised. By the same principle we ought to be induced to forgive more readily the injuries which we receive from them: and the wicked are always the injurious party. A good man, from a sense of the injustice that has been done to him, may be provoked to say and to do things which he ought not to have said and done: and in the protection of his own rights he may be tempted to do harsher things than is agreeable to his temper. But still he is just and honest. He is not the first aggressor. He never deliberately hurts his neighbour either in his person, or in his property or character.

While it is our duty to have compassion upon wicked men, it is no less our duty

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to use every prudent method of reclaiming and saving them. If our pity for them is real, it will lead us to be active in the use of such means as are subservient to the purpose of their reformation. Therefore, do not encourage them in their wickedness. Show that you make a difference between them and good men, by giving greater honour to these last. Convince them that neither their wealth, nor their rank nor wit, can compensate, in your estimation, for their want of piety and virtue, which are the only honourable and lasting ornaments of man. By acting thus you will encourage good men, and you will show true love to the souls of the wicked.

Our love to mankind is commonly too much separated from a concern for their salvation. There are many who would esteem it a thing most dishonourable to rob or to steal, or to be dishonest in their bargains, or unfaithful to their promises, who, nevertheless, by a strange inconsistency, feel no compunction for their ha-

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ving done much hurt to the souls of others, by their evil example, and even by criminal seduction. They feel compassion for the poor and the afflicted; and yet they can, without remorse, rob the innocent of their virtue, and destroy their peace for ever. They can sacrifice unsuspicious innocence to their loose pleasures, with as much indifference as if God did not regard what they do, and as if the ruin of the reputation and of the soul of their fellow-creature was a matter of no concern. They can, without scruple, set before others an example of profane and dissolute manners, even when it doth not profit them, as if God was never to reckon either with themselves, or with those whose souls they have corrupted. But is this the sort of love which brethren ought to feel for one another? Is this the sort of love wherewith CHRIST hath loved us? If, O man, nature has so formed thee, that thou canst weep for the temporal miseries of thy fellow-men, how canst thou, in contradiction to that very nature, and to all the

the sacred admonitions of religion, be so unmerciful as not only to use no endeavours to help forward thy brethren in the way to heaven, but even to be so profanely cruel as to lead them astray into the paths of vice and destruction? Hast thou no concern about what shall befall thy fellow-creatures in a future and eternal state of being? Hast thou no concern for thy own soul? Hast thou no regard to the feelings of tender and indulgent parents? Shalt thou, for the sake of indulging some base passion, or of enjoying some forbidden transitory pleasure, blast, in one hour, the fair hopes of fond parents? In one hour shalt thou destroy the whole good effects of their fervent prayers to Heaven, and of all that affectionate pains which they have taken to give their dear offspring a religious and virtuous education? Serious reflection upon the guilt of corrupting others cannot fail to give the most painful wounds to the conscience, and to make a man ashamed of his selfishness and cruelty. Is not innocence sacred? Is not the salvation of a man's soul his dearest concern? Hear how our SAVIOUR has

threatened those who seduce his disciples from the faith of the Gospel, or who lead them into the commission of sin: "Who-
" so shall offend these little ones who be-
" lieve in me, it were better for him that
" a millstone were hanged about his neck,
" and that he were drowned in the depth
" the sea *."

Let parents themselves beware, lest, by negligence in the virtuous education of their children, they leave the door of their hearts unguarded, or lest by their own evil example they be the very means of corrupting them. Let parents consider what a dreadful inconsistency there is between natural affection to offspring, which is the strongest of all the degrees of love, and such a bad example as tends to corrupt those, to whom, by every sacred tie, they are bound to give a religious and virtuous education. The giving children such an education as fits them to shine in polite circles, or the amassing of great riches to them, or even the qualifying them

* Mat. xviii. 6.

them to be raised to great offices in the state, can shew but a selfish love to them, unless proportionable care has been taken to render them pious and virtuous. The noblest species of education, and which is no hindrance to other useful and ornamental branches of learning, is that which consists in storing their minds with virtue, or a sense of the duty which they owe to God and to man, and thereby furnishing them with the best means of securing the salvation of their souls. Hereby, and in no other way, can parents express sincere affection to their children.

C H A P. III.

*Charity to the Poor is a natural and amiable
Expression of Brotherly Love.*

THE poor and needy are a *set* of mankind who are particularly cast upon our care. Heaven has charged their relief on us as a debt which we owe to its greater bounty to ourselves. One reason why God has appointed that there should be such a class of men, seems to be that of giving greater room for the exercise of the humane feelings of the heart. Both from the natural dictates of mercy, and from the special injunctions of God's revealed word, the indigent have a strong claim to the compassion of their fellow-men. Nature itself pleads for them. The native feelings of our own hearts are a law
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to us in this case: and GOD has, by many repeated injunctions, commanded us to show them mercy. In conformity to these natural dictates, which are the needy's advocate, a certain provision is made for them by the laws of every well-governed state. But still a great deal is left to the charity of individuals, whom both nature and the revealed law of GOD command to listen to their cry, and to take care that they do not perish for want of bread. Charity to the poor is, therefore, a duty, to the performance of which every man is bound, in proportion to their need and to his abilities to provide for them. But it is, at the same time, a duty which admits of so many circumstantial *requisites* and modifications, that no precise or general rules, which will apply in all cases, can be laid down concerning it. A regard ought to be had, both to the temper with which we give alms, and to the persons upon whom we bestow them. In the case of those who give alms, they ought always to give with a willing mind. This is the

temper which St Paul commended in the Corinthians: "I know the forwardness of your minds, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia *." And the same great Apostle exhorts us, saying, "Be ready to distribute, willing to communicate †." By giving alms to the poor with cheerfulness and readiness we enhance the value of the present which we make them; whereas by giving grudgingly we diminish its merit, both by hurting their delicacy, and by forgetting what we owe to God, who requires a spirit of willing charity. If we would act in the true spirit of this duty, we must perform it in a devout acknowledgment of God, who has commanded us to regard the state of the poor, and in the temper of sincere love to our brethren, with whose miseries we ought to sympathise. If we feel the influence of these two great principles, our charity will flow from its proper source, and we will be led to seize every opportunity, or fit occasion, of doing good by

* 2 Cor. ix. 2.

† 1 Tim. vi. 18.

by being helpful to the indigent. The duty of charity to the poor does not require that a man should part with his whole estate, and reduce himself to a state of dependence upon others, for the sake of his relieving the needy. He ought not to be indifferent to his own wants, and to the demands of his family. It is only required, that his ear should be open to the cry of the poor, and that he should be always ready to assist them in proportion to his abilities to give. This does not supersede the necessity of observing the following apostolic maxim: "But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel†." Our alms ought also to be given seasonably. A gift may be of double value to-day to what it shall be to-morrow. By an improper delay, thou mayest lose an opportunity both of granting help to the needy, and of doing that which is virtuous and profitable to thyself.

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† 1 Tim. v. 8.

In the case of those also to whom alms are given, there are some who ought to have a preference to others. A regard ought to be had both to the characters and to the circumstances of those to whom we give alms. We ought to give the preference to those who are sober and industrious, but who, from sickness or from casual misfortunes, are reduced to a state of want, and to those who are fallen from a condition of opulence and power, not through mismanagement and prodigality, but by providential losses and cross accidents, and To those who are aged and infirm, and unable to work, and To those who are modest, grateful and pious. "As
" we have therefore opportunity, let us do
" good unto all men, especially unto them
" who are of the household of faith*."
Although this command did particularly respect the primitive Christians, who lived among the Heathens and enemies, and were a persecuted sect; yet, after Christianity is become a national religion, it may
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* Gal. vi. 10.

be interpreted in a less limited sense, and applied to those in general who are more pious and virtuous than others. By giving alms to the idle and worthless, we may indirectly support and encourage vice. By giving more than is consistent with our fortune, we may do injustice to our own families. By giving to the poor from ostentation and vanity, we may deprive ourselves of Heavenly praise and reward. In either of these ways, we may "give all our goods to feed the poor, and yet have no charity."

Although, for the reasons already mentioned, the rules that can be given for the right performance of this duty are at best but general, much being left to every man's own discretion in proportioning his alms to his own circumstances and opportunities, and to the characters of those to whom he gives, yet the temper of charity ought to be habitual. And though those poor persons who live in our neighbourhood, and whose state we are acquainted with, have a preferable claim
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to strangers, yet the voice of humanity is never to be disregarded, even in the case of those who are strangers, when we see that their wants are real. In cases of great extremity, all men have an equal claim to our compassion and assistance, if it is in our power to relieve them. When the case is clamant, or when a man's necessity is such that he must perish, if he is not soon covered from the cold, or provided with food, or assisted by medicine, we must not resist the impulse of nature, and the voice of GOD, calling upon us to take pity on him. In the exercise of this charitable and humane spirit we must also continue all our days. New objects of compassion, and fresh opportunities of showing mercy, do constantly occur: and this life is the only season wherein mercy to the afflicted can be exercised. Charity to the poor consists not in occasional almsgiving, but in a permanent temper of compassion for the afflictions and poverty of others. Since alms-giving is the spirit or essence of piety to GOD and of the other
good

good dispositions of the heart, out of the abundance of the goodness of the heart, acts of humanity to the distressed will always necessarily proceed. Alms-giving is an essential part of the spirit of good principles. It is the natural extract or essence of piety and benevolence; and therefore it must always be an inseparable attendant of the character of a real Christian.

Although in the case of giving alms to strangers, we ought to show discretion, and consider whether we ought to regard their supplications, or to what extent we ought to relieve them, yet there are many others whose poverty we are well acquainted with, and whom, therefore, we are bound to relieve with all readiness, in proportion to our abilities and opportunity. The objects of our charitable pity are very numerous; and therefore the humane feelings of the heart have a constant opportunity of being exercised. The poor and the helpless dwell in every neighbourhood. They are to be seen in the streets of every city; and they are to be met with on every road.

road. The hungry and the naked dwell not far from any man's house. In almost every district we may see the sorrowful widow and her fatherless children, labouring under all the hardships of poverty. Her soul is full of grief on account of the loss of him, who provided for herself and her children. She weeps, because her husband "is gone down to the grave, " and shall come up no more." The sound of his feet at the threshold, the welcome foretoken of his being returned, shall be no more heard. He shall return no more to be the staff, and the indulgent father, of his family. With a kind heart, but with a sparing hand, she divides the *scanty* meal among her half-starved children; and when it is spent, she often knows not where she shall find another for herself and for them. Her children are clothed in rags; and her heart bleeds when she hears them crying with both hunger and cold, while she has it not in her power to deliver them from wretchedness. In the transports of her sorrow, and in despair of finding relief

lief from men, piety points out the true source of her help and consolation. She lifts her eyes to Heaven, and seeks relief from GOD. To the gracious Father of mercies she applies* in behalf of herself and her children: and to Him she will not apply in vain. For the LORD heareth the cry of the poor and destitute. "He is the Father of the fatherless, and the husband of the widow. The Lord is gracious and full of compassion." Must he not, therefore, be well pleased with those who provide for the poor and the destitute? "But to do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices GOD is well pleased*." The merciful man is much regarded by Heaven. His "charity shall cover a multitude of sins." It will plead for him in the great day of final Retribution. At the Last Judgment every other virtue as well as mercy will be placed to the account of the righteous, and no vice more than the want of pity will be then overlooked; yet the circumstance of

* Heb. xiii. 16.

of our LORD's singling out a merciful disposition, or the want of it, as the criterion by which he will judge of the characters of men, is sufficient to convince us that the merciful man stands high in the *record* of Heavenly favour. And why should we not be careful to purchase the favour of Heaven, at the easy rate of giving to the poor a little of what we can spare? When the Great Day of the LORD's reckoning with mankind shall come, and when the value of a merciful spirit shall be seen in its true light, that which men have unjustly withheld from the poor, will then be seen to have been a very unprofitable saving.

The want of the temper of charity to the poor is excusable in no man; for even though we cannot supply them in their need, we ought to wish to be able to relieve them. Though we cannot give them money, we ought to treat them kindly, and administer comfort to them. Thus said the Apostle Peter to "the lame man, "who was laid daily at the gate of the "temple to ask alms of them who entered
2 "into

“into it.” “Silver and gold have I none,
 “but such as I have give I thee: In the
 “name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and
 “walk*.” In the case of the rich, the
 want of compassion for the poor is a thing
 quite inexcusable, because they can give
 assistance to the indigent without any in-
 convenience to themselves. By shutting
 up their bowels of compassion from the
 needy they contract much guilt, and ex-
 pose themselves to the wrath of the Su-
 preme Lord, who has chosen them to be
 the stewards of His goods, and the dis-
 pensers of His bounty to mankind. The
 rich have it in their power always to assist
 the indigent in ordinary cases, and, in the
 times of scarcity or of extreme necessity, they
 may save the lives of their fellow-creatures,
 and even render their state comfortable. By
 a small diminution of the expence of their
 table or of their amusements, or even of
 their dress and clothing, they may provide
 for many poor families without putting
 themselves to almost any inconvenience.

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* Acts. iii. 6.

That which they can easily spare, by such a small retrenchment, in respect of food or clothes or lodgings, as puts them to little inconvenience, would make the hearts of many to sing for joy. O rich man, deny not thyself this greatest of all pleasures. By relieving the needy thou wilt give such fine touches to thy heart as the mere sordid possession of all the wealth of the Indies cannot yield. The rich ought to consider, that poor householders, especially when they are grown old and infirm, or when they have a numerous family of children, are always much more to be pitied than common beggars, who go from house to house. Why should they or any of our fellow-creatures be pinched with hunger and cold, while those who live nigh to them have it in their power to relieve them at so easy a rate? Why should any of our fellow-creatures, whose state we know, live in misery from want of the common necessities of life, while we "fare sumptuously every day?" If we deny them even the crumbs which are carried away from our table,

table, can our own consciences excuse such criminal selfishness, and such indifference to the state of our half-famished brethren; or will GOD overlook such a degree of guilt and injustice committed by the stewards of His household?

A disposition to befriend the helpless, and to take an interest in the state of the poor, is a mark of true greatness of mind, as well as an evidence of an amiable sensibility of heart. It discovers that disinterestedness and nobleness of mind, which stands opposed to a selfish spirit, in as much as it is giving away to those who cannot repay us. This noble disposition our SAVIOUR has commanded us to cultivate and improve by such acts of generosity as are quite free from selfishness.

“ When thou makest a dinner or a supper,
 “ call not thy friends, nor thy brethren,
 “ neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours,
 “ lest they also bid thee again, and
 “ a recompense be made thee. But when
 “ thou makest a feast, call the poor, the
 “ maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou

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“ shalt

“ shalt be blessed ; for they cannot re-
“ compense thee : for thou shalt be re-
“ compensated at the resurrection of the
“ just*.”

The best principle from which we can perform acts of charity or any other duty, is a reverence for the authority of the Divine Lawgiver : and the expectation of receiving a reward from Him for the good which we have done to others, is so far from containing any degree of blameable selfishness, that, on the contrary, it is a laudable proof of our trust in God, and of our faith in His gracious promises. If we are charitable from the hope of receiving our reward, not from men, but from God, or not in this life, but at the resurrection of the just, we shall act in the true spirit of the Christian religion. And a charitable temper, proceeding from this principle of faith and piety, will always be more amiable and more uniformly useful, than when it proceeds from vanity or worldly motives of any kind. It should

also
* Luke xiv. 12.

also be considered, that we shall lose the true reward of our beneficent actions, and the whole praise that is due to them, unless they are performed from a principle of faith and piety. If, for instance, we shall show mercy to the poor from mere ostentation, the pleasure which we take in gratifying our vanity, is all the reward which we need expect to receive. Thus saith our SAVIOUR, "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them : otherwise ye have no reward of your Father who is in heaven. Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the synagogues, and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth : That thine alms may be in secret : and thy Father who seeth in secret, Himself shall reward thee openly *." From this reasoning it

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* Mat. vi. 1,—4.

appears, that piety and true charity are sister virtues, and that they cannot exist separately. That sensibility and tenderness of heart, from which charity springs, is also a fit soil for piety to grow in. And wherever there is real piety, there will we also find a charitable spirit. There can be no sincere devotion toward God, separate from charity to men. The same principles which lead us to love and to reverence God, do also beget kindness and mercy to our fellow-creatures. Almsgiving is the necessary spirit or extract of both these principles. "But whoso hath
"this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his
"bowels of compassion from him, how
"dwelleth the love of God in him?"
And that we may have every needful encouragement to abound in works of charity, we are assured by the infallible word of God Himself, that, in a future state, we shall receive a reward proportionable to the exercise of our mercy, or to the de-

* 1 John iii. 17.

degree of that good which we shall have done to others. Those who shall sit on the highest thrones, and who shall wear the brightest crowns in Heaven, are those the light of whose charity and mercy shone the brightest on earth. "But this
"I say, He who soweth sparingly, shall
"reap also sparingly: and he who soweth
"bountifully, shall reap also bountifully.
"Every man according as he purposeth
"in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth
"*a cheerful giver**."

* 2 Cor. ix. 6, 7.

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CHAP.

C H A P. IV.

We ought to minister to the Consolation of the sick and afflicted.

THE miseries of mankind are not confined to a state of poverty. Human nature has to struggle with various other sorts of distress, in this state of trial and conflict. In every district, there is one who is cast upon a bed of sickness, and his bones are full of pain. The plowers "plow" upon his back, and make long their furrows." Another is in a mournful state of grief and melancholy, on account of the death of a dear friend or of a valuable relation, or on account of the misfortunes of his child or brother. The *staff* of his bread, it may be, is broken, or the consolation of his old age is taken away. A third is bowed down with the sorrow of a broken heart. His favourite child is snatched

snatched away in the prime of his days. The grave is a bed to him whom his soul loved. His only son, it may be, in whom all his hopes were centred, is taken away from the midst of his companions and his sports, to show the weeping parents that death spares not any age, and that children are but uncertain joys. A fourth is in great heaviness and bitterness of spirit, on account of the vices and misconduct of those with whom he is connected in business, or by friendship, or by the ties of blood. And a fifth is labouring under the anguish and horrors of remorse of conscience for the guilt of his past life. Thus affliction, with its smart rod, visits every place. Distress of one kind or other is every where to be found. While some are feasting and indulging mirth, others dwell in the house of mourning. The gay, the prosperous, and the healthful, form no proper idea of the sufferings which are felt by the numerous class of the afflicted. The prosperous are strangers to the feelings of those who have suffered by shipwreck and by

fire and by wars. They are unacquainted with what is, at this moment, felt by those who are standing by a dying parent, or who are carrying an only son to the grave, or who are weeping for the disgrace that has befallen a child or brother, or who are daily witnesses to the agonies which some incurable disease makes a dear relation to feel. One part of mankind are utter strangers to the many woes and griefs that are endured by the other. Afflictions are incident to the rich and to the poor, to the prince and to the subject of lowest degree. Riches cannot ward off diseases, neither can human greatness and power prevent the causes of pain and grief. Wretchedness often dwells with outward splendor, and disease and grief have their habitation in the palaces of the great, as well as in the cottages of the poor. Therefore, a benevolent heart has a constant opportunity of administering balm to his neighbour's wounds. The house of misery stands in every corner of the land, and its door

door is ever open to let us in to visit the sufferers.

When we take a view of the various sorts of misery to which human nature is liable, and when we consider how many of our fellow-creatures are suffering pain and grief, whilst we, perhaps, are in good health and prosperity, we ought to remember Who it is that maketh us to differ from others. We ought to consider that we, who are still in the body, are liable to the like chastisements; and we ought, on that account, to be always ready to "weep with them that weep, and to mourn with them that mourn." We ought not to be deaf to the natural voice of pity, when we either look into the dwellings of the afflicted, or when we reflect upon what our eyes have seen there. How can we walk among the seats of multiform misery, without taking an interest in the woes of the afflicted? Insensibility to the sufferings of others is showing a disregard to the voice of Him, who has commanded us to "love as brethren, and to be pitiful."

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Since compassion is a thing natural to man, the want of sympathy with the calamities of others, is a proof of the heart being mournfully corrupted, and rendered callous by habits of vice. We ought to consider that our sympathy with the sick and unfortunate is of great benefit to them; and that it cannot be withheld without much guilt. Our fellow-feeling disburthens them of part of their sorrow. How very different is the state of a solitary mourner from that of one, whose friends visit him, and bind up his wounds, and pour wine and oil into his sores. Those who are grieved in their minds, receive much consolation from perceiving that their friends and neighbours are not unconcerned about what they suffer, but that, on the contrary, they take part in their griefs. And although, in some cases, the heart is so much swallowed up of grief, that it refuses to be comforted, yet this overwhelming state cannot, for many reasons, be of a long continuance. When the first transports of grief, which court solitude,

solitude, are over, the afflicted will not then refuse to hear the voice of consolation. On the contrary, they will wish to see the face of a comforter, and to hear those gracious truths which are a cordial to the grieved mind. They listen with eager attention to those sweet arguments for resignation and hope, by which the blessed doctrine of the Gospel kindly soothes our woes, and bids our hearts not be troubled. Therefore, O man, neglect not to administer consolation to thy afflicted neighbour, as soon as the first ecstasy of his grief is over, and before the return of reflection upon the causes of his sorrow does begin to prey upon the delicate parts of his frame. Set before him that amiable view which the Gospel gives of the character of GOD, and of our relation to CHRIST JESUS, the Saviour of the world, and of the sweet influences of the spirit of grace and consolation, and of our hope of a better state of things being soon disclosed. Hereby thou shalt become the minister of comfort and support to those
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who either suffer in their bodies, or are grieved in their minds. By directing the thoughts of the afflicted to such meditations and hopes as the doctrine of the Gospel suggests, thou wilt open a well-spring of consolation, by the streams whereof their hearts shall be made glad. They will, in some degree, forget their pain from the joy which is thus set before them, or they will endure it with patience from the hope of that "crown of glory, which fadeth not away."

He who is thus employed in soothing the griefs of his brethren, and in lessening human misery, lives a life of usefulness and honour. By his being thus the true friend of mankind, he is the favourite of Heaven. The angels, those benevolent spirits who minister on earth, and who have also the privilege of being in the presence of God, carry good tidings of him to the regions above. The superior spirits behold his sympathetic tenderness with complacency and love. Whilst "they shall have judgment without mercy, who have

“ shewed no mercy,” the merciful acts which proceed from his tenderness and sympathizing heart, will plead for him at the throne of judgment. CHRIST will reward his humane offices as if they had been done to himself. The exercise of compassion for the afflicted is also an excellent mean of improving a man’s own heart. It is not only the performance of a duty, which Heaven will greatly reward, but it is also a mean of increasing our virtuous sensibility of soul. It tends to purify the affections, and to soften the heart. The virtue of compassion, like all the other virtues, is improved by exercise; if, not with the indifference of a sick-nurse, but with the feelings of men we truly sympathize with the sufferings of our brethren. The heart melts into tenderness when we see the strong grown weak with some violent disorder, and crying out with pain, or when we see the young and the beautiful wasting and pining away with a lingering disease. How does it tend to soften the heart to behold the sorrowful wife sitting
by

by her dying husband, whom she sincerely loves, and having in her grieved mind the sad prospect of a state of widowhood, and the sole care of fatherless children! The sight of affectionate parents mourning for the death of their favourite child, or of their only son, gives a lively exercise to all the best and noblest feelings of the soul. The heart is made better, not only during the time in which we look at scenes of distress, but when we reflect afterwards upon what we saw and felt in the house of mourning, we are softened and improved by every review of our neighbour's affliction. Even reflection upon the sufferings of those of our fellow-creatures whom we have never seen, such as those who are in a state of painful slavery under barbarous task-masters, or those who are shut up in prisons and infirmaries, or those who, along with their friends and their children, suffer shipwreck and other great calamities, and those many thousands who have false and gloomy notions of the Supreme Being, and who, from ignorance of the nature
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and certainty of a future state, are filled with horror when they think of eternity: Reflection, I say, upon these calamities of our fellow-men cannot fail to soften and improve the heart.

The distresses of others are designed also to improve our piety, by making us thankful to GOD, who has hitherto preserved us from those afflictions which others suffer. When we see the strong man made weak and feeble by sickness, we are thereby taught not to boast of our own strength. When we behold the young and the healthful going down to the grave, we are forewarned of the uncertainty of this life. When we see a cheerful and prosperous family robbed at once of their best comforts, or reduced to poverty by unfortunate accidents, we are thereby taught that this world is nothing but vanity, and that its sweetest enjoyments are of an uncertain duration. If afflictions are designed, by a wise and gracious Providence, to do good to the sufferers themselves, we must necessarily partake of the good effects of
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their affliction by sympathizing with them. While we sympathize with, and comfort, those who are mourning for the dead, we are, at the same time, reminded of our own latter end, and of the fast approaching period, when our friends shall weep for us, because we also must soon die. Thus, while we perform the natural and friendly office of weeping with our brethren in their distress, their afflictions may, at the same time, be converted into a school of virtue to ourselves. On all these accounts the wise king of Israel saith, "It is better
" to go to the house of mourning, than to
" go to the house of feasting : for this is
" the end of all men, and the living will
" lay it to his heart. By the sadness of
" the countenance the heart is made better *."

Having said so much concerning charity, as it respects alms-giving and the visiting of the sick, it will not, I hope, be considered as an improper digression from the subject, to observe, before we conclude
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* Eccles. vii. 2, 3.

this Book, that this noble branch of brotherly love has a still more extensive meaning, than that wherein we have yet considered it. Charity signifies the entertaining a good opinion of mankind. It implies a generous unwillingness to think evil of any one. It stands opposed to suspicion and jealousy and a proneness to censure rashly, and to judge unfavourably of the actions and characters of other men. The charitable man always puts the best construction upon his neighbour's actions that they can bear; and he makes the best apology for their misconduct that it will admit of. When he hears men blamed, he suspends his judgment till he sees full evidence either of their guilt or of their exculpation. Charity is also opposed to that partiality by which men are quick-sighted in perceiving, and severe in censuring, the faults of others, whilst they find ready excuses for their own errors and vices, or are altogether blind to them. This part of a selfish and uncharitable spirit our SAVIOUR has particularly men-

tioned and condemned. " And why be-
 " holdest thou the mote that is in thy bro-
 " ther's eye, but considerest not the beam
 " that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt
 " thou say to thy brother, Let me pull
 " out the mote out of thine eye; and be-
 " hold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou
 " hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of
 " thine own eye; and then shalt thou see
 " clearly to cast out the mote out of thy
 " brother's eye *." Charity, in its full
 and extensive meaning, is the greatest of
 all the virtues. It is superior to faith and
 hope, inasmuch as the end to be obtained
 is superior to the means of its attainment.
 One great design of Christian faith is to
 produce a charitable spirit, and without a
 charitable spirit there can be no well-
 founded hope. Faith will be swallowed
 up in vision, and hope in fruition; but cha-
 rity abideth for ever. Although there will
 be still room for the exercise of faith and
 hope in the heavenly state, yet the objects
 of these will be so altered by real vision and
 fruition,

Mat. vii. 3—5.

fruition, that they may comparatively be said to cease, and, in some respects, to be changed; but charity will remain to be, even in Heaven, the same sort of temper that it is now. Its only change will consist in its perfect degree of improvement. It will remain to be the same temper; but its glow will be perfectly ardent and constant. It will be directed to the same objects in so far as it is pure love, but its sweetness will be there far more perfect and more ravishing. This is a doctrine which St Paul teaches in the following descriptive encomium which he has given of charity.

“ Though I speak with the tongues of
“ men and angels, and have not charity,
“ I am become as sounding brass, or a
“ tinkling cymbal. And though I have
“ the gift of prophecy, and understand all
“ mysteries, and all knowledge; and tho’
“ I have all faith, so that I could remove
“ mountains, and have no charity, I am
“ nothing. And though I bestow all my
“ goods to feed the poor, and though I

“ give my body to be burned, and have
“ not charity, it profiteth me nothing.
“ Charity suffereth long, and is kind:
“ charity envieth not: charity vaunteth
“ not itself, is not puffed up, doth not be-
“ have itself unseemly, seeketh not her
“ own, is not easily provoked, thinketh
“ no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but
“ rejoiceth in the truth: Beareth all things,
“ believeth all things, hopeth all things,
“ endureth all things. Charity never
“ faileth: But whether there be prophe-
“ cies, they shall fail; whether there be
“ tongues, they shall cease; whether there
“ be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For
“ we know in part, and we prophecy in
“ part. But when that which is perfect
“ is come, then that which is in part shall
“ be done away. When I was a child, I
“ spake as a child, I understood as a child,
“ I thought as a child: but when I be-
“ came a man, I put away childish things.
“ For now we see through a glass darkly;
“ but then face to face: Now I know in
“ part;

“ part ; but then shall I know even as
“ also I am known. And now abideth
“ faith, hope, charity, these three ; but
“ the greatest of these is charity *.”

* 1 Cor. xiii.

part; but then I know even as
also I am known. And now I
faith, hope, charity, these things; but
the greatest of these is charity.

B O O K III.

On the PLEASURES which flow from
BROTHERLY LOVE.

C H A P. I.

*Love to Mankind is the Gratification of some
of the noblest Affections of the Heart.*

THE exercise of love to mankind is of
itself a thing very pleasant. No
part of a virtuous temper is more truly its
own reward. Benevolence is the sound
and healthful state of the mind. It be-
gets peace and harmony within the whole
soul. A temper of good-will to those of
our own species keeps the whole inward
man in a state of pleasing order and
serenity. The man who possesses this
temper

temper dwells at ease, and he is a stranger to that painful tumult of disorderly passions, which torment the malicious and the revengeful. Goodwill to mankind is productive of much self-enjoyment, and it prevents all those inconveniencies and vexations, which often fall as a punishment upon the selfish and the ill-disposed. He who loves mankind, and gives evidence of his wishing well to every one of his fellow-creatures, is dignified with the name of a man of a good heart, which implies his having a great degree of self-enjoyment, as well as his possessing a disposition to do good to others.

The sweetness of indulging benevolence or goodwill to mankind, is one principal cause of the pleasures of private friendship. The pleasures of brotherly love are felt more strongly in private friendship than in any other case, because the glow of benevolence, by centring with peculiar warmth in one person, gives a more exquisite touch to the soul, than that which can be produced by its more general

ral operation, or when mankind in general are its object. The benevolence of private friendship is the sweetest, on this account also that it there meets with a more immediate and a more perceptible return of affection. There are many concomitant circumstances besides, which help to increase the sweetness of private friendship and to render its delights more exquisite than those of general goodwill to mankind, such as a stronger degree of mutual sympathy with joy and grief, and of mutual confidence and secrecy, and of mutual patronage and assistance. For these reasons, a faithful and virtuous friend is the sweetest cordial of life. Still, however, the pleasure of gratifying the natural sentiment of benevolence is the chief ingredient of the sweetness of private friendship itself.

For the same reason, the chief cause of that grief which we feel on account of our being separated, either by death or by distance of place, from those whom we sincerely love, is the stop which is thereby put to the operation of the benevolent

nevolent principle, by the removal of the object to which it had been for some time directed with peculiar warmth. The current of our love being prevented from flowing by the closing of this sweet channel of it, we feel a void within us, which is painful. We feel a want of something, which creates uneasiness and grief, the degree of which is proportionable to the ardor with which we loved the friend or the relation who is taken away from us. We mourn, and are in bitterness, till time has rendered our remembrance of our friend a less lively sensation, and till our sentiment of love has been accustomed to the want of its dearest object, and till the exercise of reason and religion has fortified the mind, and taught it to submit, with greater willingness, to the appointment of Heaven. This also shows the reason, why there is always a certain degree of pleasure mixed with the exercise of compassion for the afflicted. Sympathy with the distresses of others is mingled with love to them; and therefore, though

commiseration be in itself a thing painful, yet the indulgence of that love wherewith it is mixed never fails to give pleasure, which is of a most refined sort. Hence, while we weep for the distresses of others, we take pleasure in the shedding of such tears. There is a mixture of sweetness even in grief, because it is the gratification of a branch of that benevolence which is the best part of our nature. It flows from that sensibility of heart, which is the source of the greatest virtues and pleasures, and which distinguishes the humane and the great soul from the marble-hearted and the selfish man.

If there is something pleasant even in the sensation of compassion, because it flows from benevolence of soul, what a still more delightful thing is it to be the means of relieving the unfortunate. By affording deliverance to the captive, or by providing for the poor and the fatherless, or by raising up those who are bowed down, and by comforting those who are grieved in their minds, we furnish the best materials of
our

our happiness. By such generous and humane deeds, we enjoy the pleasures of brotherly love in their greatest degree of sweetness. In the case of affording relief to the distressed, benevolence of soul yields a double pleasure, because it is a compound of the sensation of having removed grief, and of enjoying, without alloy, the full gratification of the sentiment of fraternal love. The pleasure of doing good does not expire with the mere act, but lasts long after the action which produced it is past. In every review of it we enjoy the pleasures of it anew. Hence the benefactors of mankind are they who enjoy the sweetness which flows from exercising the benevolent affections in its fullest perfection. They enjoy the pleasures of benevolence in a degree proportionable to the good which they have done.

Amidst that painful scene of toil and sufferings which our SAVIOUR went thro', during the course of his public ministry, what exquisite pleasure must he have felt, from the recollection of those merciful ac-

actions

tions which he did to the souls and to the bodies of men. What pleasure can surpass the delight of his sensations, when he raised Lazarus from the dead, and restored him alive to his weeping friends; and when he restored to the widow of Nain her only son, after his friends were carrying him to the grave; and when he made the blind to see, and the lame to walk; and when he restored peace and soundness of mind to those who were tormented with the power which the evil spirits had got over them? Above all, must he not have enjoyed the most exquisite pleasure, in reflecting upon his having brought spiritual light to a world that was "sitting in darkness," and upon his having become the author of eternal life to all pious and obedient souls? Hence the prophet foretold concerning him *, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."

A pleasure somewhat similar to his must have been felt by his apostles, and by all those who have been the benefactors of man-

* Isaiah liii. 11.

mankind, in respect of promoting either the temporal welfare or the future salvation of their brethren. Opportunities of doing good do still remain; and therefore the enjoyment of this species of pleasure is within every man's reach. None ever does a humane or a generous action without being rewarded for it, by self-approbation, and by many sweet reflections arising from every review of it. Hast thou clothed the naked and fed the hungry, or hast thou been a parent to the orphan, or hast thou brightened the setting sun of the aged man who was destitute, or hast thou comforted the mourner, thou dost not fail to receive a present reward of thy merciful spirit. Thy own heart blesteth thee. In the pleasing approbation of thy own mind, thou enjoyest a gratification, which is far superior to the coarse pleasures of sense. By such acts of tenderness and compassion thou hast contributed more to thy own real felicity, than thou couldst have done by wasting ten times more of thy time and money in the pursuit of sensual indulgences.

ces. Feeble and insipid are all those pleasures in which the heart has no share. For that reason, the coarse gratifications of sense yield no true satisfaction, and they are of a momentary duration. It is even by borrowing something from moral sentiment that they acquire their chief relish. But the pleasures of the heart, among which those of benevolence hold a principal rank, are rational and spiritual and satisfying. They are also permanent joys, because they are renewed every time that we reflect upon the actions which produced them.

When brotherly love is reciprocal, the pleasures arising from it are such as sweeten the social state. It renders the intercourse among the human kind, in every neighbourhood, and in every village and city, a thing most agreeable. If the degree of mens love to their brethren was such that they visited one another, not merely from a sense of propriety or from a regard to the observance of the rules of politeness and ceremony, but from pure
O affection,

affection, they would always receive one another with unfeigned kindness, and their conversation would be seasoned with the sweetness of undissembled complaisance, and of mutual condescension and forbearance. When families visit one another with professions of friendship which are the real dictates of pure love and goodwill, how sweet and how comely is their mutual intercourse! Such friends and neighbours have the truest enjoyment of life; and their state of sweet amity is a thing pleasant to every beholder. The Psalmist David compares the pleasures arising from true love subsisting among mankind to the fragrantcy of the richest odours, and to the refreshing influence of soft ethereal dews. He compares it to the fragrantcy of that precious ointment which bedewed the sacred head of Aaron, and which descended upon his hallowed vest, and to the influence of those dews of Heaven which refreshed the parched grass and the withered flowers of the mountains of Hermon and Zion. "Behold, how good
"and

“and how pleasant it is for brethren to
“dwell together in unity. It is like the
“precious ointment upon the head, that
“ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s
“beard, that went down to the skirts of
“his garments. As the dew of Hermon,
“and as the dew that descended upon the
“mountains of Zion, for there the Lord
“commanded the blessing, even life for
“evermore*.”

The mutual love of brethren, as the pious King of Israel here observes, is a decent and a comely, as well as a pleasant, thing. It gives us the idea of men living together in a manner which answers one great purpose of their creation, which is that of being helpful to one another, and the means of rendering the enjoyment of life reciprocally sweet. By reciprocal love we disburden one another of our griefs, and we enliven our mutual joys. The beauty of reciprocal affection is so engaging a thing, that we take pleasure in visiting in the family where it reigns; and

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there

* Pſal. cxxxviii.

there is much comfort in being a member of that society wherein its sweet influence is felt. It gives a certain degree of importance, and an agreeable colour, to the state of all those families and societies with whom it dwells. It has the power of exciting in us the idea of beauty, like harmony in sound, or like regular proportion in a magnificent building. Its effects appear graceful to every beholder, like the symmetry and correspondence of parts to each other in any sensible or visible object. It is the emblem of that beautiful order which prevails among the works of the creation. Moral beauty is the most excellent of any assemblage of graces or proportion of parts; and of all moral beauties, that of undissembled friendship subsisting in families and societies of men, is the most capable of raising delight in the beholder. Hereby the state of mankind on earth resembles that of the glorified spirits above. It is the fair emblem of that eternal peace and harmony and love which reign among the celestial brethren,

thren, and among the angels who are in the presence of God.

The present pleasures which flow from the temper of love to mankind, are greatly enhanced by the sense of the Divine approbation. It gives an additional sweetness to the pleasures of it, to reflect that this is a temper which God loves. He has promised to reward a benevolent spirit even with temporal good things. Thus to the exercise of charity, which, as has been shown, is an important branch of brotherly love, He has promised the blessings of wealth and of safety. "The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself *." "They," to wit, the liberal, shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied †." "I have been young, and now am old: yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread ‡." By the "righteous," as the

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following

* Prov. xi. 25.

† Ps. xxxvii. 19.

‡ Ps. xxvii. 25.

following verses show, the Psalmist means those who are merciful from a principle of love to mankind.

It is also an addition to the pleasures of a benevolent temper, to reflect that love to mankind is one chief mean of giving peace at our latter end. The blessed effects of the principle of love to the human species are truly felt at the solemn period of death. The remembrance of no part of a well-spent life tends more to make a man die with calmness and with hope, than the consciousness of his having been the friend of mankind. He who has often an opportunity of visiting those who lie on their deathbed, may perceive that they always reflect with much seriousness upon that part of their past life which regards the treatment which they have given to their fellow-men, and that they are either comforted or made sorrowful, according as they have treated others well or ill. The dying man is always willing to say with triumph, if he can, Thank God, I never was either unjust or unmerciful.

It

It is also an addition to the pleasures which flow from the gratification of a benevolent spirit, to consider that God has made many gracious promises to reward, in a future state, all those who are truly kind and merciful to their brethren. To benevolent souls are prepared the highest seats of glory in the world to come. On them shall be bestowed the white robes and the sceptres of the just. A sincere and constant exercise of love to mankind, even in spite of temptations and of injurious treatment, will be rewarded with a pre-eminent degree of glory and felicity in the everlasting mansions. If, from a principle of true charity and piety, we kindly seize every opportunity of promoting the temporal welfare of our brethren, and much more if we shall strive to save their souls, we shall receive a great "re-compence at the resurrection of the just."

The hope of such great rewards in the life to come cannot fail to increase the sweetness of indulging the natural sentiment of

love to mankind. This is a part of the pleasure flowing from the gratification of the benevolent affections of the soul, which is most exalted, and which gladdens the heart.

CHAR.

C H A P. II.

*The Exercise of a Benevolent Spirit procures
the Esteem and the Love of others.*

WE are naturally disposed to love one who is of a generous and kind temper. A man of a good heart is a stranger to that selfishness and that injustice which engender hatred and strife; and he is possessed of that disinterested kindness and of that real concern for the welfare of others, which never fail to excite our love to him. We feel a natural proneness to love one who is possessed of that nobility of mind, which leads him to take a real interest in the happiness of others, and which makes him sacrifice, on many occasions, his own private profit and ease to the good of society. A disposition to rejoice with the prosperous, and to weep with the unfortunate, and to take an active part in assisting the helpless
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and in relieving the miserable, is that which never fails to conciliate the affection and the esteem of every beholder. Real love to mankind is a principle which communicates its own colour to the whole powers of the mind; and therefore it has a natural tendency to produce that sort of behaviour to all men which is pleasing and agreeable. Every stream which flows from this fountain-principle is sweet and refreshing. Its language is mild and engaging, and its treatment of others is kind and obliging. In all its features it is amiable. From true benevolence of soul there always proceeds a treatment of others, in respect of both words and actions, which insensibly engages the heart, and begets love to it. Goodness, or a disposition to communicate happiness, has something in it so superlatively excellent, that it is often used to express virtue in general. It is the most amiable of all the virtues; and its influence over human happiness in general is by far the greatest. The exercise of this temper has a native power in it to conciliate

liate the love of others, because it is the direct object of every man's own benevolent affections. What is so properly the object of our love as goodness is? Is not the infinite goodness of GOD the foundation of that supreme love which we owe to Him? Besides, he who has a true love to mankind, discovers a degree of magnanimity superior to that which the bulk of men are possessed of. It is the effect of such a degree of self-denial, in respect of the selfish passions, that others are conscious of the benevolent man being superior to themselves. We commonly admire in others those qualities in which ourselves are deficient. Although, in some cases, our neighbour's confessed superiority in accomplishments is a ground of silent envy and detraction, instead of being a motive to praise his worth; yet in the case of a truly benevolent temper, few men are disposed to withhold from it that tribute of praise which is its due. If it ever produces envy in others, that must arise from some casual circumstances, for it cannot happen on
its

its own account. True benevolence of heart is always, for its own sake, the object of our love and esteem.

It is also proper to remark, that without benevolence of soul no character can be truly great. Without it, valour is nothing but ferocity, and patriotism is mere selfishness, and alms-giving is either ostentation or prodigality. So well is it understood, that no character can be esteemed truly great, or be capable of engaging the love and the respect of other men, unless a concern for the good of mankind be a chief ingredient in the principle of his actions, that every one strives to have the appearance of a benevolent temper, even when the reality of it is wanting. As there would be no counterfeits but for the sake of something that is real; so the universality of pretensions to the noble virtue of love to mankind, shows that it is reckoned a necessary ingredient in the accomplishments of every amiable and respectable character. But the counterfeit of an affectionate regard to the happiness of others, whether

it respects great actions or the mere civilities of neighbourhood and of ordinary conversation, is soon discovered, and is found to be a thing very different from the native principle of love to our brethren. In every thing, the genuine and the spurious are very different from each other; and that difference, though it may not be quite discernible at first sight, is immediately seen, when it is considered in relation to the end that is to be accomplished. Thus, ask a real favour of a man of pretended goodness of heart, and, by the slightest trial, ye will discover that his kindness is mere dissimulation and hypocrisy. When you apply to him to do a good office to yourself or to your friend, or when you beg of him to put himself to a little trouble or expence to serve you in your need, you immediately pull off the cloak of brotherly kindness which he impudently wore, and he appears in his true character of selfishness and of guilty unconcern for the welfare of his neighbours. But in the case of a man of real goodness of heart, the more that
his

his benevolence is tried, the more conspicuous does it become. The more that demands are made upon his generosity, the better is it known. It is in trying emergencies, or in those cases in which he voluntarily sacrifices his own interest and convenience and ease to promote the welfare of others, that his generous deeds sound his praise, and render his name blessed among men. A man, whose goodness of heart is thus proven by trial, never fails to receive his reward in the esteem and love of his fellow-men. They think of him with approbation, and they speak of him with applause. Such a man has few enemies, and he has many friends. There is a natural inclination in men, not only to speak well of one of this character, but also to befriend him in his need, and to raise him to a state of eminence and power. All his acquaintances sympathise with his distresses, and are forward to deliver him from straits. When even the great man falls, few pity him, if, in his prosperity, he showed an unmerciful spirit,

rit, or if he did not employ his power in doing good to mankind. When the prodigal is reduced to want, the very persons whom he fed at his board, have no compassion for him, and give him no help. But the man of genuine benevolence of soul, is, in no case, altogether destitute of friends; for the LORD blesteth both him and his children. In reviewing the vicissitudes of human life, and in seeking to know whether the Divine promise, that the posterity of the benevolent shall be blessed, and kept from want, be really verified, we ought to distinguish between that love to mankind which is a permanent religious principle, and that liberality which proceeds from mere ostentation, or from misguided lavishment.

I do not deny that the character of even a good-hearted man will be sometimes misrepresented. Few men are altogether without enemies; because peculiar circumstances and situations do of themselves frequently create enemies to even the best men. It happens, sometimes, that the world receives a bad impression of even a good
3 man,

man, because one or more of his actions have been attended with such peculiar circumstances, that the malicious have thereby found means to misrepresent the real principles and tendency of his conduct. And although bad impressions of any kind are more easily received than they are removed, yet, when real goodness is seated in the heart, and is the principle of a man's conduct, it will, in time, establish its deserved good reputation. The tenor of his life will at last do justice to his prejudged character. Its amiable brightness dispels the darkness of misrepresentation, as the strong rays of the sun break thro' the morning mists. In no case is truth more certain of getting the victory over falsehood, than in that of a benevolent heart showing, in the course of its trial, that it is incapable of being intentionally unjust or uncharitable, or untender or indelicate.

It also sometimes happens, that actions which proceed from a pure principle of love to mankind are misconstrued, and meet

meet with bad returns. Mens generous attempts to promote the welfare of their brethren, either in their civil or religious concerns, are sometimes misunderstood and misrepresented, and receive the reward of ingratitude and of bad treatment. Instances of this kind are, however, but comparatively rare. Although the designs of the well-wishers to mankind may, for a while, be mistaken, and though their labours in endeavouring to do good to their brethren may meet with a bad recompence, yet the eyes of men will at last be opened, and they will praise the spirit and good tendency of those actions which they formerly blamed. Thus the SON of GOD was reproached in the days of his flesh. His character was evil spoken of, and his doctrine was despised. But as soon as the prejudices of education were removed, and when his character and doctrine were examined with candor, the true greatness and perfection of both were confessed and admired. His doctrine is now acknowledged, by all those who receive it, to be

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the best gift that Heaven ever bestowed on mankind; and his name is now revered, wherever it has been made known, throughout the whole earth. And "his name shall endure for ever. His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed *." Let none be discouraged from exercising a benevolent spirit, in promoting the welfare of their brethren, from the dread of reproaches flowing from a misconstruction of their aims, because justice will at last be done to their characters. The eyes of men will, in time, be opened to see their worth; and their patriotic spirit, and their generous deeds, will be praised, even after the world seeth them no more. But even though men should always remain blind to their merit, they shall, nevertheless, receive a due reward. He who knoweth all things, and who judgeth righteously, will reward them in a future state.

Thus

* Pf. lxxiii. 17.

Thus a life spent in doing good is the best mean of procuring the love and the esteem of our fellow-men. It makes them think well of us, and it induces them to treat us with marks of honour. A good name thus founded on deserved praise is one of our noblest enjoyments. "A good name," saith Solomon, "is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold *." As reproach and contempt are among the worst of human evils, so that commendation which is sincere, and which our own heart tells us is just, is a thing very desirable. The possession of the good opinion and applause of mankind gives sensible touches of delight to the mind, and it confers a certain dignity upon us in our own eye. This is the foundation of that love of popularity, which is a thing almost universal, and which, in some, is so strong, that they are willing to sacrifice every thing, even that goodness and integrity of heart which ought to be its best founda-

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tion,

* Prov. xxii. 1.

tion, to the attainment of it. Let it be observed, however, that, if our honest endeavours to benefit society are followed by popularity, as the just consequence of deserved merit, it is a truly pleasant thing, but that, if any one courts popularity merely for its own sake, he will either be altogether disappointed, or he will pay too dear a price for it: and after all, he is in great danger of not enjoying it long. If popularity is the effect of real merit, or of our having done essential good to mankind, it is one of our best pleasures. It is a delightful thing to enjoy the good opinion and the praise of our fellow-men, without paying any other price for it, than that of gratifying that virtuous principle which leads us to wish them well, and to do them good as far as we are able. But it is at once a mean and a base thing to pursue popularity as the chief end of our actions. This is reducing ourselves to a state of low and painful servitude. It takes away our claim to that honesty and that independence

dence of mind, which are essential to self-enjoyment and to human freedom.

That applause which is derived from a dissembled behaviour is not only likely to be but of a short duration, but it is also incapable of yielding real satisfaction to those, in whose minds the least spark of honesty is remaining. Applause derived from the vile arts of dissimulation and hypocrisy is always mixed with a certain degree of self-condemnation. The consciousness of not deserving it destroys the better half of the value of enjoying it. He who gets unmerited applause, enjoys it, as the thief enjoys what he has stole, with the painful sense of his having no right to it, and with the consequent terror of detection and punishment. Can that popularity, for instance, yield any true satisfaction to a minister of religion, which is derived from his substituting hypotheses of his own, or the opinions of other men, in room of the infallible doctrines of the Spirit of God, or from his bending these holy writings to answer the purpose of favouring a sy-

stem of religion which is grateful to the prejudices of the careless, but by which, even in the midst of the true light which shineth among us, they are inhumanely kept in a state of darkness, and must thereby necessarily be deprived of some of the best grounds of that consolation and instruction, which religion was designed to administer to man amidst his afflictions, and under his sense of guilt? Can an intelligent Romish priest derive much pleasure from the adulations of a bigoted people, whom himself is helping to delude? Can a minister of state derive any solid satisfaction from popularity, founded on his pursuing measures which he knows, will, in the end, prove ruinous to the commerce and to the power of the nation? In such cases, the applause of our brethren serves only to sharpen the arrows of conscience, and to make them pierce with a deeper wound. That praise which a man is conscious of not deserving, makes him secretly condemn himself, because, at the very moment when he is praised, he is viewing him-

himself in the light in which he knows that others would view him, if his principles and designs were laid open to the world. But that commendation which is the fruit of our having designed well, and of our having done real good to mankind, is a thing of a sweet-smelling favour. It is a great present reward of our love to mankind. It is bread of the crop which ourselves had sown, and fruit of the tree which our own hands had planted.

He who is the sincere friend and benefactor of mankind, appears in society with dignity, and with the pleasing sense of merited approbation. He enjoys the consciousness of safety, and of his receiving marks of honour and regard, wherever he is known. He knows that he shall be every where well received. He walks among men, as in the midst of companions and brethren, whom he loves, and who, he knows, regard him with reciprocal affection. Whilst those, whose vices and injustice have incurred the displeasure and

the hatred of mankind, are afraid to appear in public, because they dread to read in the very countenances of their fellow-men that reproach and censure which they know that they have merited, the well-wishers and benefactors to mankind take pleasure in coming abroad, and in mingling with society, because they do then both gratify their native principle of goodwill to others, and are made happy by the deserved caresses and the pleasing marks of friendship which they receive. Is there any pleasure that can touch, with more quick perception, a man of true sensibility, than to find that he possesses the hearts of all those who know him, and that he is received, in every company, with marks of love and esteem? This is a sort of pleasure which is rational and satisfactory, and which sweetens human life. Let it, therefore, be a motive to our cultivating that love to mankind and that willingness to do them good, which is the only certain and just foundation of our enjoying their sincere approbation and esteem.

esteem. Who is not sensibly affected by reflecting upon the pleasure which Job must have felt, from those sweet proofs of the love and esteem of his fellow-men with which his merciful and generous actions were rewarded; And which himself has thus described? "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish, came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not, I searched out. And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth. Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand. My root was spread out by the waters, and the
"dew

"dew lay all night upon my branch. My
 "glory was fresh in me, and my bow was
 "renewed in my hand. Unto me men
 "gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at
 "my counsel. After my words they spake
 "not again, and my speech dropped upon
 "them. And they waited for me as for
 "the rain, and they opened their mouth
 "wide, as for the latter rain. If I laughed
 "on them, they believed it not, and the
 "light of my countenance they cast not
 "down. I chose out their way, and sat
 "chief, and dwelt as a king in the army,
 "as one that comforteth the mourn-
 "ers *."

* Job xxix. 11, to the end.

CHAP.

C H A P. III.

The Exercise of Love to Mankind is an Imitation of the Goodness of GOD, and it gives us a Foretaste of the Heavenly Happiness.

GOODNESS is the most glorious attribute of the Supreme Creator. His desire of communicating happiness is visible in all His works and dispensations. He is continually employed in doing good; and in this He takes a supreme delight. In the works of creation and providence, and still more, in the discoveries of His revealed word, we see that the LORD is good and gracious, and that "His tender mercies are over all His works." Goodness, or a disposition to communicate happiness and to remove misery, is that glorious property of the Supreme Being, which renders Him the object of our gratitude

titude and love. His attributes of power and wisdom and holiness and justice render Him venerable and awful; but His goodness inspires our confidence, and begets pleasing hopes. His other attributes keep us at a distance from Him, through awe of His Supreme Majesty, and through the terror of His punishing us for our imperfections and our guilt; but His goodness represents Him to the mind as a Being who is both accessible and gracious, and even as a Father, who loves and pities us, and to Whom we may approach with the confidence of children. For this amiable and encouraging view of the nature of God we are chiefly indebted to the blessed dispensation of the Gospel, wherein His goodness appears more brightly than it does anywhere else. By the doctrine of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, we see that goodness is the seat of His eternal throne. From that blaze of goodness which is in Him, who is the Supreme King and Father of all, proceed those bright rays of mercy and love, which shine upon all His creatures

creatures and upon all His works, in every part of His vast dominions. Goodness is mingled with all the other attributes of His nature, and gives a softer aspect to His irresistible power, and to His immaculate holiness and perfect justice. The LORD rejoiceth in the perfection of His own goodness. He delighteth in seeing His creatures made happy, and it is His desire that all men should be saved. In the exercise of His essential and unbounded goodness He is happy in Himself, and hereby He makes every creature to partake of happiness. From Him every creature receives its food and its clothing; and throughout His whole vast family, both that on the earth and that in the Heavens, His goodness is diffused. From the goodness of GOD proceeded the grand structure of the Heavens, and the existence of those angels and archangels, whose happiness reflects back the glory of the LORD, and is the ground of their own eternal praises of that rich ocean of goodness, from which their state did spring. From the goodness

of God the numberless worlds which the universe contains, arose. From thence sprung the earth, and man, and all our joys and all our hopes.

Though we were to consider the goodness of God only as it respects man, and the sort of state which is allotted to him on the earth, we shall find sufficient proofs of its boundlessness, and of its claiming our warmest gratitude and praises. The expressions of His goodness to us are such as tend to melt the heart into tenderness, and to raise it into the fervour of devotion. His treatment of us, in respect of both temporal and spiritual favours, is such as makes us view Him in a light which gladdens the soul. The serious view of His goodness and mercy to the children of men gives powerful touches to all the best feelings of the heart. Our whole path is strewn with His blessings. Along the whole road through which our journey lies, even from the cradle to the consummation of our bliss in paradise, He has scattered the visible and affecting tokens of

of His fatherly grace and love. The streams of His bounty and goodness flow around us all the way. In our distress He pities and relieves us. He visits us with the consolations of His spirit; and He heals our diseases. He regards the wailings of the disconsolate, and He heareth the prisoner that moans, and He binds up the broken in heart. In danger, He is our shield. In the day of calamity He erects a pavilion over us; and He hideth us from the storm. After we are laid low, He raiseth us up again. He taketh us out of the pit into which we had fallen, and He setteth us in a place of safety. He delivereth us from the snare which was laid for us, and He calls back the threatened evil, whose seemingly approaching stroke had filled us with dismay. When our friends forsake us, the LORD taketh us up; and He remarks, with a fatherly concern, those tears which flow unregarded by the world. In the person of His own SON, He is become the consolation and the hope of all sincere Christians, because He has shown them

them how their sins are forgiven, and because He "hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light." Being far removed from the passions and resentments of men, He keepeth not His anger for ever: when we repent, He forgiveth us.

Even from this short and imperfect sketch of the goodness of the Divine Nature, we may see, that, by doing good and communicating happiness to others, we imitate God in that which is His own chiefest glory and perfection. Is any thing more pleasant and more honourable than the imitation of our Supreme Original? If it is a part of His essential and perfect felicity to communicate happiness to His creatures, shall not we also find it to be a pleasant thing to do good to our brethren? Can any thing be more pleasant and more honourable, than to be fellow-workers with God in promoting happiness, and in lessening misery? Is any thing more reasonable, than that we should aim at a resemblance to God, whose children we are,

are, and whom He has commanded to imitate him? He is our great Parent-spirit; and therefore it is a thing most reasonable and most becoming that we *should* possess that spirit of kindness and love, which is a most glorious and essential part of the nature of Him from whom we sprung. Therefore, as the Divine Parent from whom we all descended, is good and merciful to us, let us also do good, and be merciful, to one another. Hereby shall we glorify our Father who is in heaven, because the goodness of His nature, though it be visible in all His works, is, nevertheless, best reflected by the transcript of it in man, that noble creature who bears His own image.

By doing good, in imitation of the goodness of GOD, our life will be a resemblance to that of our Divine SAVIOUR, who "went about doing good;" and we shall be employed as the angels are. The LORD JESUS CHRIST was a fellow-worker with the Father in doing good to mankind.

"My Father," said he, "worketh hitherto,

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“and I work *.” The blessed JESUS co-operated with the Father in lessening the miseries of mankind, and in promoting their true consolation and happiness. He co-operated with the Father in persuading men to do to others, as they would have others to do to them, which is a temper of justice and of benevolence that is not only conducive, but even indispensably necessary, to their mutual peace and felicity. He co-operated with Him in the glorious work of redemption. He had the same desire with the Father of bringing peace to the earth, and of saving the souls of men. His sentiments of compassion and of love to the human race were like to those of his Father. Therefore, upon occasion of his observing that power was committed to him to bestow eternal life upon whom he will, he saith, “I and my Father are one †.” The angels derive their very name from the benevolent nature of their office, which is that of carrying God’s messages of peace and of grace to His creatures.

* John v. 17.

† John x. 30.

tures. The prophets were called gods, because the word of God came unto them, which they were appointed to deliver to His people for their good*. Judges are called gods, because they are God's deputies, appointed to administer justice and to give righteous judgment, and to secure to every man his rights, by a true interpretation, and by a vigorous execution, of the laws †.

For the same reason, every man who is possessed of such goodness of heart as leads him to use active endeavours to promote the peace and welfare of others, and who strives to lessen human misery, is an imitator of God. Nay, he is God's deputy on earth, because he co-operates with the only true God in doing good. He glorifies or manifests the divine nature to the world, because he exhibits in real life that benevolence of heart which is the fruit of the spirit of God.

In goodness, or in the desire of communicating happiness, we are made capable of

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* Rom. xiii. 1.

† Psa. lxxxii. 1, 6.

bearing a greater degree of resemblance to God, than in any of His other moral perfections. In power and in wisdom, our resemblance to Him is very limited and imperfect. Our hatred to sin is also so imperfect, that even the best men have but a faint similitude to his immaculate purity. Though, in the case of goodness or kindness of heart also, the degree of our benevolence is very small, in comparison of the power of that boundless love which is innate and inherent to God, yet every man has it in his power to do much good, and the spring of that goodness, or its seat in the heart, may, by exercise and the divine assistance, be improved in a very great degree. Even when we want the abilities and opportunities of doing good, the benevolent wishes and desires of the soul may be pure and strong. The spirit of benevolence and mercy may be always ardent in the heart, and in a degree far beyond the limits of its exercise in outward acts. It is always possible to indulge good wishes for the happiness of our neighbours and of man-

mankind, though the act of the will may be out of our power. And as intention constitutes the very essence of good and evil, so he who is possessed of the principle of love to mankind, will always do good when it is in his power; and when he wants the power of doing so much good as he wishes, his good wishes and intentions will be the ground of his reward. This is what St Paul teaches when he says, "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not*."

Love to our brethren, or a desire of rendering them happy, being thus an imitation of the goodness of the Divine Nature, it is, on that account, one of the chief excellencies of man. To this noble temper the sacred writers give the honourable title of uprightness and of perfection. In many places of the sacred writings, he who has a good heart, and who wishes well to all his brethren, is

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called

* 2 Cor. viii. 12.

called a perfect man, that is, he is relatively perfect, and he "is more excellent than his neighbour." When our SAVIOUR says, "Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father who is in Heaven is perfect*," it is evident from the context, that the word, perfect, there signifies merciful. His meaning is, be ye kind and merciful to one another, even as your Father who is in Heaven is kind and merciful to you. Nothing can more effectually secure the friendship of our Maker than the imitation of His goodness and mercy. The LORD loveth all the benevolent. His eyes behold them with pleasure, and "they walk in the light of His countenance." Is it not reasonable to believe that those are most beloved by the LORD, who do most resemble Him in the most glorious perfection of His own nature? On this account, love to mankind must necessarily be one of the best preparations for the eternal enjoyment of GOD, or for the happiness of a future state.

* Mat. v. 48.

state. One essential part of the felicity of Paradise consists in the temper of pure benevolence and love; and therefore, unless we are possessed of that temper during the course of our present pilgrimage, we cannot be prepared for relishing the enjoyments of our Father's house. How can we aspire to the seats of perfect peace and of pure love, unless we feel the sweet influence of this temper already prevailing in us? Can malice or revenge dwell with the God of love, and with the angels of grace, and with those saints, now glorified, whose benevolence of heart was one of their best pleas for the fulfilment of the Divine promise of their salvation? Heaven, as was already observed, is the region of perfect peace and harmony. There love dwells in every breast, and friendship reigns in all its sweetness and perfection. Among the assembly of perfect spirits no ground of quarreling ever occurs, and no malicious sentiment is ever felt; and therefore among them the voice of discord is never heard. All the painful

ful evils which flow from the want of brotherly kindness are from thence excluded, and all the blessings and pleasures, consequent upon unfeigned kindness and goodness of heart, are there enjoyed in full perfection. In those delightful abodes of peace and harmony, every one's own happiness is made so much the sweeter by seeing that others also enjoy a state of perfect felicity. Is not an improved temper of benevolence necessary to fit us for such a place, and for such a society? They who disturb the repose of mankind by injustice and oppression, or by malice and calumny and deceit, do little consider how inconsistent their temper is with the hope of ever reaching the celestial abodes.

Hence love to mankind, together with its sister virtues, may be considered as a principle which is necessary to a happy immortality. As malice and envy are primordial of the soul's destruction, so the generous sentiment of benevolence is a principle of a happy and an immortal existence. For as in all animals, and even
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in all plants, there is a principle of life and vegetation, which, while it remains, is the appointed mean of preserving their existence, and when it becomes extinct they perish; so in the soul of man there is a permanent vital principle which is necessary to its enjoying that "Eternal life, which is the gift of God through Jesus Christ, our Lord." This principle is a virtuous mind in general, the chief ingredient in which, as the Apostle John shows by his particularising it in name of all the rest, is love and good-will to mankind. "We know," saith he, "that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren: He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother, is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him*." From this doctrine it is evident that the temper of charity and love to mankind is the principle of a happy immortality, and that the malevolent and the unmerciful carry about with them the prin-

* 1 John iii. 14, 15.

principle of spiritual and eternal death; and that therefore they have no right to aspire to the promised abodes of peace and of life eternal.

The sentiment of pure and active love to mankind being thus a real preparation for the paradisaical state, because it is the fruit of faith and of love to God, and because it gives us a holy resemblance to Him, it necessarily gives us also a foretaste of the heavenly happiness. It is true indeed, that, in judging of the nature, and of the degree, of the heavenly felicity, our conceptions of it are at the best but imperfect. "For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him*." In vain shall we mortals seek to know the whole nature and compass of the felicity of glorified spirits. In this search we are allowed to see but very imperfectly; this, however, we know, that the change of place does not remove the prevailing qualities and

* 1 Cor. ii. 9.

and temper of the mind. The sentiment of love to mankind and the desire of doing good being an essential property of a virtuous soul, it must necessarily co-exist, and be co-eval with it. The prevailing temper of the soul must always remain with it, and is not removed by the change of place. As the mind is, every where, the seat of enjoyment, so its prevailing temper must always abide with it. The soul, by its ascension to the heavenly world, is improved in all its faculties and good affections, but still its radical and predominant temper remains with it. For that reason, the exercise of a benevolent heart must give us even here a foretaste of the bliss of paradise. Since an essential part of the happiness of the New Jerusalem consists in the exercise of that love which reigns among all its glorious inhabitants, that same sentiment exercised toward our brethren here must produce in us some degree of the same kind of sensations. Therefore the present pleasures flowing from kindness of heart, and from doing good, are an anticipation of the joys
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of the celestial brotherhood. The more that the love of peace and the more that the temper of friendship to mankind prevail in us; the more that we rejoice at the prosperity of others, and are glad to see them made happy the better perception have we of the state of those who are in heaven. If piety is joined with benevolence of heart, or if our love to our brethren flows from love to God, our heavenly Father, then is the state of our heart such as gives us a sweet prelibation of the joys of perfect spirits. Is it not a most delightful thing to find the reward of benevolence of soul even here, and to anticipate the future and eternal joys of happy spirits? It is surely a strong motive to our doing good to our brethren, to know that we shall thereby partake, in some degree, of that "fulness of joy, which" "is before the throne of God." Solomon has therefore justly observed, that "the" "merciful man doeth good to his own" "soul," or feedeth it; and that there is nothing better than "for a man to rejoice," "and to do good in his life *."

* Prov. xi. 17. Eccles. iii. 12.

CHAP. IV.

The Want of the Principle of Love to our Brethren is a thing inimical to our own Happiness, and it is a Mark of very great Depravity of Heart.

EVERY evil passion is its own punishment. The malevolent passions are, however, of all others the most destructive of a man's own peace and felicity. There is something in malice, and in all its concomitant vices, that is peculiarly poisonous to a man's own tranquillity, as well as productive of much disquiet and hurt to others. GOD seems to have designedly guarded men against the indulgence of a malevolent spirit, by the self-torment which it always creates. Malevolence being a temper directly opposite to that of love to mankind, it may be considered as the cause of the far greater part

of the distresses and calamities which we suffer in this state of mortality. From hence proceed injustice and envy and revenge, with all their train of woes. From malice arose the temptation to commit the first sin; and to its influence upon man's own heart may be ascribed most of those miseries which the posterity of Adam have all along suffered. Malice is an exclusion of every good principle of the heart. It corrupts the whole moral powers of the soul, like an eating canker and like a consuming moth. Malevolence is an unnatural resistance to that strong principle of benevolence which God has implanted in man, and to that solemn voice which speaks to us from above by the doctrine and laws and example of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

How, therefore, can peace of mind dwell with malevolence? As well may a man be said to enjoy health amidst the tortures of a violent and painful disease, as one can be said to enjoy peace amidst that corrupted and disordered state of the mind, which is the effect of a malevolent spirit. Is it pos-

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fible that the mind can enjoy peace and quiet, whilst one of the noblest affections of the heart remains unexercised, and has its place usurped by a directly opposite principle? Accordingly, malice is always a source of a man's own wretchedness. All its concomitant vices have also a direct tendency to produce remorse and self-condemnation. Thus injustice is always attended with self-reproach. Can he, in whose breast the least spark of the natural feelings of a man yet remains, look at the vexations and miseries which he has brought on others by his injustice and oppression, and not feel some inward compunction? Do not deceit, and flattery with a view to take advantage of others, and all the sycophanting arts, render a man mean and contemptible in his own eye? Can ever he appear great or worthy even in his own estimation, whose chief business it is to be always watching for an opportunity of taking advantage of the weakness and unskilfulness of others; and who courts the affection and the regard of
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superiors, by no other pretensions to merit but by saying such things as he thinks will please, whether they be true or false; and who makes even a traffic of selling falsehood under the name of truth; and who thereby runs the hazard, every day, of being detected, and of being then despised by every man of honour and integrity? Revenge, which is the summit of malice, and a deprivation of every particle of the benevolent principle, does not only produce the most dreadful effects in respect of hurting others, but it does also render him who indulges it completely wretched. He who indulges revenge takes a fire into his own bosom, to torment himself. He taketh up a scorpion which stings him, and he feeds within himself a worm which dieth not, till he has brought calamity to his neighbour, and till he has involved himself in additional misery. He torments himself in this life, to gratify a passion, which, without sincere repentance, will also be punished in the world to come by the still more awful effects of the wrath of God. Im-
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placability of temper is another concomitant of malice, which produces a most hateful and a most baneful state of mind. An unwillingness to forgive those who have given either real or imaginary offence, is a thing truly deplorable. The implacable man is a stranger to the noble sentiment of benevolence, or to that goodness of heart which we have been hitherto explaining and enforcing. He directly violates all the most solemn laws of Heaven, and he sets at defiance the awful threatenings of damnation. To an implacable spirit the Divine forgiveness is denied. It is declared by an infallible authority, that the unforgiving shall be excluded from heaven. Thus saith the Great Lawgiver of the Christian church *, "For
" if ye forgive men their trespasses, your
" Heavenly Father will also forgive you.
" But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive
" your trespasses." Is any thing more capable than such a threatening as this to
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* Matth. vi. 14, 15.

make the revengeful and implacable man afraid? Can any thing tend to give a greater alarm to his conscience? How unlike is such a man to his GOD and his SAVIOUR!

GOD appointed sacrifices under the Mo-
saic law to be a premonition of His placability to sinners. In the person of His own SON, our LORD JESUS CHRIST, He has given a still more clear and satisfactory declaration of His readiness to forgive. When, O man, thou beholdest the placability of thy glorious Original, art thou not ashamed and afraid of indulging an unforgiving spirit? If He who is Omnipotent is willing to forgive thy numberless trespasses if thou shalt repent, shalt thou, His dependent creature, be unwilling to forgive thy brother even one offence? Such is the malignant nature of malevolence, that, even after the spirit of implacability and revenge is abated, its very dregs have a poisonous influence upon the heart. From its very ashes there springs up such a degree of pride and baseness as
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keeps a man from making overtures of friendship to those who had offended, or to those whom perhaps himself had first injured, even after his hatred and ill-will are extinguished. He still remains in bondage to a meanness and baseness of spirit, which prevents his frank and open reconciliation to those with whom even malice itself does no longer prompt him to live in a state of enmity. His own reason, which tells him that he ought to renew his wonted habits of friendship or good neighbourhood, and lay aside all former expressions of malevolence, can only bring him the length of gnawing, like the dog, the chain that ties him, without procuring the free and manly exercise of a benevolent mind. But free and open forgiveness is the mark of greatness of spirit; whereas implacability, or even the being shy to make offers of reconciliation, is a proof of weakness and littleness of soul. When a man reflects upon his having lost the pleasures of social intercourse with his neighbours by the indulgence of a malevo-

lent spirit, and upon the injustice and cruelties which it has led him to commit, and upon the hazard to which he has exposed his own soul from his having thereby greatly offended Heaven, he can enjoy but little peace of mind. Reflection upon that corrupted state of heart in which he has indulged himself, cannot fail, in his serious moments, to give him much bitterness and grief.

Envy, jealousy, tale-bearing, and evil-speaking, may also be considered as the effects of malevolence, or, at least, of the want of a proper degree of love to mankind. Those who are addicted to any of these vices, are at once the refuse and scum of society, and its greatest pests. They hurt others either for the mere sake of doing mischief, or from the mere love of talking, or from the preposterous and mean desire of knowing and of meddling with other mens affairs. But such men use very dangerous and poisoned darts: and as they are generally shot at the characters of their brethren, they do greater mischief
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than it is possible to describe. They are a far more dangerous and pernicious set of men than either thieves or robbers. Against the one we can be upon our guard, but against the other there is no possibility of securing ourselves. The thief or the robber takes away only those goods, the loss of which may be repaired; but the defamers of our good name take away our all. They basely take away what they cannot restore, and by which we suffer more than we could have done by the loss of worldly goods, and even sometimes by the loss of life itself. They create a loss which is often long in being repaired, and which is always accompanied with a greater or a less degree of distress. For that reason, tale-bearers and slanderers, and all the rest of that hateful tribe, ought, by the authority of a special statute, to be branded with some discernible mark of infamy, whereby they may be known and avoided, as one avoids the poison of arsenic or the bite of a mad dog. What evil ought to be more carefully avoided than the malevo-

lence of those who create divisions in families, and sow discord among brethren, and set friends at variance? Men of this character are not only hurtful members of society, but they are disagreeable to the well-bred and the humane, even when they are not suspected of being able to do hurt. Their proneness to censure others, and especially the absent, renders them offensive to every man of politeness and of generous principles. It is even a thing disagreeable to hear a man speaking of his enemy who has done him real injustice, with too much acrimony and bitterness of language. Such a strong appearance of rancour tends more to exculpate, than to criminate, the injurious party. What a still more offensive thing is it to hear worthy characters attacked and defamed, and for no other apparent reason but to gratify the malice of the evil-speaker? One man of a malevolent temper commonly discomposes a whole company, and keeps a whole family in a state of bitterness and perturbation. For in whosever heart malice

lice is, he feels himself impelled to vent it in some shape or other; and his bad temper, like a poisonous leaven, sours the festivity of social intercourse, and converts the joys of domestic life into disquietudes and sorrow.

The whole forementioned list of those who are under the influence of a malevolent spirit, are no less unhappy in themselves than they are chargeable with being the authors of distress and misfortunes to others. By wilfully resisting the power of instinctive benevolence, and by disobeying the command of God to love and to do good to their brethren, and by indulging that temper of malice which assimilates them to the evil spirits, they feel none of those rational and satisfactory pleasures which men, by their original nature and social state, are designed and fitted to enjoy. Let a stranger to our world be made acquainted with the principles of human nature, together with the hopes and the fears of man, and let him be made to understand the design and the spirit of

the Christian religion, and then let him behold an assembly of sincere Christians living together in that sweet intercourse of good offices, and in that temper of pure friendship, which the Gospel inculcates, would he not admire the genius and tendency of our holy religion, and would he not be captivated with the sight of those who are enjoying that mutual peace and felicity which flows from their following its directions, and from their feeling its power over their hearts? Let him also cast his eyes upon a group of those who are under the influence of a malevolent spirit, and who are equally the disturbers of the repose of mankind and the destroyers of their own peace, and would he not inquire who these men are, and what system of religion they have been taught, and for what they are designed? When he is told, that the hand of nature had formed them originally with the same principles, and with the same propensities to brotherly kindness and charity with those whom he first beheld, would he not be surprised

fed at the degree of corruption and misery into which they have fallen? When he understands that they have been taught the same religious system, would he not be amazed at their audacity in resisting the commands of the Supreme God, and in their disregarding the sacred authority and example of His holy messenger, Our Lord JESUS CHRIST? When he is let know that their hopes and their fears with regard to a future state are the same with those of the humane and charitable, would he not express the greatest wonder at the inconsistency of their temper and conduct with those views of a future state which the Gospel has revealed to them? What can these men mean, he would say, by disturbing the peace of men on earth, and yet preposterously expecting to dwell in those regions, from whence the malicious and the unmerciful and the turbulent are declared, by their own religious tenets, to be excluded? They are afraid of the punishment of a future state; and yet they wilfully indulge that temper, which is the
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awful presentiment of it. They embitter their own life, and they give distress to others; and yet they know that they must soon die, and be called to an account for their malevolence of spirit. How infatuated are these men! They are blessed with the means of being happy, and yet they choose to be miserable. They are casting away their souls for a great deal less than nothing. What a strange degree of madness is in their course of life, and how dismal are their prospects!

As the man, who has defaced the image of God in his soul, and is become insensible to the voice of Nature and of Divine revelation, and has substituted a temper of malevolence in the room of that brotherly kindness and charity which is the characteristic of the sons of God, renders his own life full of wretchedness, so he also discovers the greatest perversion and depravity of heart. Is it not an evidence of the utmost depravity to disorder and pervert that glorious system of the mind, the work of infinite wisdom and

and grace, and by which men are formed with innate propensities to love and to do good to one another? Those sweet and tender sensations of the heart, which proceed from true kindness and benevolence of temper, are the feast of angels. A proper degree of sensibility of soul to the pleasures of relative and social life infuses sweetness, and gives such touches to all the moral powers of the mind as resemble the paradisaical state of blessed spirits. Must not he, therefore, have a most perverted soul, who is not only insensible to these refined pleasures, but who even gives himself wholly up to a temper and course of life, which is altogether destructive of these moral and heaven-born propensities and joys? What a depraved thing is it to take pleasure in brawling, and to be pleased with the hoarse and discordant voice of anger, and to indulge malice and strife with a greedy appetite, as one rolleth a sweet thing in his mouth! It is a mournful evidence of depravity, not only to have no relish for the sweet
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and affecting sensations which arise from the circumstances of mens various relations to one another, and from social intercourse, but even to corrupt the fountain from which that happiness flows, and to convert all its sweet streams into bitter waters of enmity and discord. Hereby the voice of the Supreme God is also disregarded. Mens love to strife and resentment makes them regardless of the threatenings of His law, and insensible to the sweet allurements arising from the gracious promises which He has made to kind and benevolent souls. By the indulgence of a malevolent spirit, men also show a criminal insensibility to the spirit of CHRIST's doctrine, which every where breathes the sweet ardor of brotherly sentiment. His doctrine is calculated to soften the heart, and to infuse its own amiable spirit into the breast of every one who reads it with faith and attention. How amiable and affecting is his own example of charity and love! Great is the corruption of heart which is discovered

ed in not being captivated with his affectionate labours and humble condescension and sufferings, to teach us to be kind and condescending and merciful to one another. The indulgence of strife and malice is an evidence of depravity of heart, because it also shows a criminal indifference to our state hereafter. It is the bartering away the happiness of an eternity for the base pleasure of indulging such passions as efface the image of God from our souls, and as give us a likeness to the accursed spirits both in temper and in misery. If this be not depravity of heart, it is difficult to explain what it consists in.

It may be contended, with equal justice, that the want of the temper of love to our brethren is no less a mark of depravity of Taste, than it is a proof of corruption of heart. Taste, when it is considered as a property of the mind, is most commonly applied to the fine arts, and it signifies the having a discernment of beauties or blemishes in poetry, painting, and music, to which we may justly add style and composition

position in writing, and the being sensibly touched with the effects of that discernment. As he who has not, either from nature or from education, any just knowledge of these fine arts, is not a competent judge of the beauties or imperfections exhibited in the execution of them; so he, whose own heart is a stranger to the temper of goodness and benevolence, cannot discern the true beauty and excellence of that temper in others. He may admire in others that degree of self-denial in respect of the selfish passions, which is necessary to the uniform exercise of liberality and mercy, and which he knows that himself is not possessed of; but he does not discern the excellence and the charms of Christian benevolence, as it is connected with the pure and exalted state of the soul. He sees not this amiable temper in its connection with the assurance of GOD's love, and with peace of conscience, and with the hope of a blessed immortality. He discerns not its pre-eminence and worth in a light which enables him to connect it with its

present pleasures, and with its raising the soul in which it dwells to one of the highest seats of glory and felicity in the heavens. And if a man is incapable of discerning the lustre and excellence of goodness in a human soul, much less is he capable of discerning the riches and the infinity of the goodness of GOD, which is diffused throughout all His works and all his dispensations. He cannot discern the amiableness and the transcendency of CHRIST's love. He may see that CHRIST's goodness was great, and that he is an amiable character; but he cannot discern the beauty and transparency of the streams of that love as flowing from a fountain that was immaculate, and that was goodness itself. As a spiritual eye is necessary to discern spiritual objects, so a benevolent heart is necessary to a right discernment of the worth and excellence of goodness in others. To this sort of blindness of mind, as well as to spiritual blindness in respect of the excellence of the gospel-dispensation in general, may be applied such passages of
of

of Scripture as these. " And this is the
" condemnation, that light is come in-
" to the world, and men loved darkness
" rather than light, because their deeds
" were evil *." " But if our gospel be
" hid, it is hid to them that are lost : In
" whom the God of this world hath blind-
" ed the minds of them that believe not,
" lest the light of the glorious gospel of
" Christ, who is the image of God, should
" shine unto them †." " The natural
" man receiveth not the things of the
" spirit of God : for they are foolish-
" ness unto him ; neither can he know
" them, because they are spiritually dis-
" cerned ‡." By men not cultivating a
taste for goodness, they perceive not the
light of that goodness of Heaven, which
shineth every where, and especially in the
Christian world.

Is not a taste for knowing and discern-
ing the goodness of God in all His works
of creation and providence, and most espe-
cially

* Jo. iii. 19.

† 2 Cor. iv. 3.

‡ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

cially in His most glorious work of redemption by JESUS CHRIST, as useful and as excellent an accomplishment, as that of discerning the beauties of the works of art? Those who are unable to discern the pre-eminent value of true goodness, or a desire of communicating happiness, are also incapable of feeling those exquisite pleasures which flow from contemplating goodness in others, and especially that goodness which appears throughout the works of GOD. Therefore, if he is esteemed a man void of taste who is insensible to the pleasures of fine music or painting or poetry, is not that man's taste still more depraved, whose soul receives no delightful sensations from contemplating the generous deeds flowing from a humane heart, and still more from contemplating the rich and unbounded goodness of his GOD and SAVIOUR? Such a man has wilfully contracted the circle of his happiness, and, by his insensibility to the beauty and worth of true goodness, he deprives himself of some of the most exquisite

quifite pleasures that the soul of man can feel.

Of all the instances of depravity which arise from the want of brotherly love, the greatest is that of making religion itself the instrument of venting malice and bad temper. By an equal degree of corruption of heart, and of blindness to the best means of true happiness, men have converted their religion into a ground of the most bitter animosities, and of committing such acts of cruelty as are a disgrace to human nature. What is most of all to be lamented, the Christian religion itself, which, throughout all its doctrines and all its precepts, breathes the amiable spirit of meekness and charity, and forbearance and love, has been made the instrument of engaging men in the most revengeful and implacable contests, and of their massacring one another. Whilst their religion itself adjured them to live together in peace and friendship, their own depravity and malice furnished them with pretences for persecuting and slaying one another,
in

in the name of defending the orthodoxy and purity of their faith. They criminally and barbarously shed the blood of their Fellow-christians from the vain pretence of doing service to GOD. Though our SAVIOUR has expressly forbidden his followers to take up the temporal sword in his cause, they inhumanly, and in defiance of the spirit and holy commands of his religion, imbrued their hands in each others blood. This is the more shameful and the more lamentable, when we consider that the very Heathens had the statues of different gods in the same city, and the votaries of each offered sacrifices to them on different altars, without giving offence. Though they were cruel in their tempers and barbarous in their manners, they thought not of persecuting one another on account of their religious opinions. But the persecuting spirit of the Jews and Christians, who have enjoyed revealed religion, ought not to be charged upon the religion itself, but upon the gross depravity of the human heart. What

the Christians suffered by the hands of the Jews and of the Heathens, their more natural enemies, was but little, compared to what they endured from the malice of their own Christian brethren. Our SAVIOUR prophesied of the bad use which professing Christians would make of his religion, and foretold, that even those who embraced the Gospel would not receive its spirit in the love and peaceableness of it, but that they would make it an occasion of hatred and quarrels. His words have come literally to pass, which he spake, saying, "Think not that I am
" come to send peace on earth : I am not
" come to send peace, but a sword. For I
" am come to set a man at variance against
" his father, and the daughter against her
" mother, and the daughter-in-law a-
" gainst her mother-in-law, and a man's
" foes shall be they of his own house-
" hold.—I am come to send fire on the
" earth; and what will I, if it be already
" kindled *?" And what was the ground of those wars, more fierce and bloody than
any

* Mat. x. 34—36. Luke xii. 49.

any that are to be found on the records of history, which the Christians carried on against one another? How can we account for such hatred and quarrels subsisting among those, whose religion powerfully inculcates a spirit of forbearance and peacefulness and love? The cause of their strife and cruelties is a thing painful and even shameful to be spoke of. They happened to differ in opinion about the true meaning of certain passages of the sacred writings, whereby they became divided into sects under different denominations, and believed that they not only had a right, but that it was even their duty, to persecute and destroy all those who held not the same opinions with themselves. Strange blindness to the spirit and to the precepts of the Gospel! Mournful abuse of Heaven's most gracious directory! As if they had wished to bring the religion of the Blessed Jesus into contempt, and to furnish its enemies with the strongest argument against it that they could possibly have found, they per-

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secuted one another with fire and sword, because in some doctrinal articles their opinions were different, and because they worshiped God according to forms, which, in some circumstances, were not exactly the same. Could Heaven approve of such fanaticism and hatred and cruelties? Does the Gospel any where authorise this spirit? Does even calm and unbiassed reason subscribe to the wisdom or the justice of mens treating one another in that manner for such a cause as that of a mere difference in opinion?

It was, no doubt, a false and corrupt system of Christianity, from which such an illiberal and persecuting spirit could spring: and therefore a reformation from that system to the belief of doctrinal opinions and to the observance of religious forms, that are more consonant to the real meaning and design of the Christian doctrine, would likewise, it might be expected, produce more of "the meekness and gentleness of Christ." But it is to be feared, that, even among Protestant Christians them-

themselves, differences in religious opinions produce secret rancour and alienation of heart. Among even some of them, it is to be feared, that a spirit worketh, which, if it was not for the influence of a better form of government and of better executed laws, and of more science and of a more polished state of society, would break out into open contention, and perhaps bloodshed. Even the Protestant sectaries do by no means discover that spirit of mutual forbearance and love toward each other, which the religion of CHRIST, their common standard of faith and duty, does most solemnly recommend.

Why do not the different Christian sects consider that they are all agreed, in regard to the essentials of religion, or those main points of faith, upon which their hope of salvation, through Divine grace, does chiefly depend? They all believe in one GOD, and in one Saviour, the LORD JESUS CHRIST. They all believe that our LORD JESUS CHRIST was the sent of GOD, and that, therefore, his words are true, and that he died for men, that he rose again, that he

is our Advocate with the Father, that he dispenses to his faithful disciples the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit of grace and consolation, and that the Father hath committed to him the judgment of the world. They all believe in the resurrection of the body, and in the immortality of the soul, and in a future state of rewards and punishments. They all believe that, through CHRIST, the forgiveness of sins is promised to the penitent; and that those who believe, and are baptized in his name, have a right to all the privileges of the children of GOD, and are the members of his true Catholic church. They all believe that a pious, righteous, and sober life, is necessary to salvation, or to our having an interest in the blessings and promises of the covenant of grace. What is, therefore, the ground of that hatred and of those quarrels which subsist among the different Protestant sects? Ye differ, it may be, about the meaning of some doctrinal passages of the sacred writings. But is this difference in opinion a reasonable ground

ground of hatred, and of dissolving the sweet ties of Christian friendship and good brotherhood? A private opinion is that which a man cannot, in some cases, help. An error in judgment is not, in any case, a proper object of punishment, unless it be accompanied with words and with actions that are sinful and hurtful to the peace and welfare of society. For that reason, persecution for conscience sake is, in all cases, a thing most unreasonable. Do not the inspired apostles of our LORD declare this? when they say, "Be not lords over " God's heritage, but ensamples to the " flock *." " Let your moderation be " known unto all men †." The mind is not an object of compulsion, like the body. I may persuade a man by the power of argument, but I cannot compel him by the force of my arm, or by the sword, or by tortures to think as I do. Besides, though he may have some peculiarities of opinion in respect of disputable doctrines, he may, nevertheless, be a good man, and a sincere Chri-

* 1 Pet. v. 3.

† Phil. iv. 5.

Christian. He differs from me in some points of faith, and I boldly think that he is in an error. It may happen that he really is in an error: but ought I not, however, to examine his opinion coolly and with due candor? The real truth of sacred scripture is so very different from many of the published systems and opinions of men, that I ought candidly to compare my opinions with what the infallible oracles have taught, and one part of scripture with another, and, perhaps, I shall be then convinced that my own opinion is not so free from liableness to objections as I had at first imagined. If a man, especially, is conscious that he is not very learned, and that his chief dictionary has been that of the systems of men, and not the infallible word of God itself, he ought, in that case, to be very modest and cautious in condemning and maltreating pious and good men, who happen to hold some opinions that are different from his own.

Disputes,

Disputes, arising from differences in opinion about religious faith, ought always to be carried on with good temper, and with polite manners. For, in that case, the attention of the disputants will be wholly confined to the matter which is the ground of their difference in opinion; and their arguments will tend to enlighten one another, and will perhaps, in the end, produce an agreement in sentiment. But if either of them shall use invectives and illiberal expressions, these will have no other effect but to produce rancour in the other, whereby both will lose sight of a candid inquiry into truth, and will fall into personal resentment and animosities, whereby each will remain convinced, as before, that his own opinion is right, and the opinion of the other is wrong. But it should be always remembered, that invectives are not arguments, and that he who uses them gives reason to suspect that he is either defending a bad cause, or that he wants abilities to defend it. Wrathful and illiberal expressions are the usual wea-

pons of ignorance, but they are none of the attendants of real knowledge and learning. Modesty and liberality of sentiment are always attendants on true science. Although one religious sect may have solid and indisputable grounds to believe, that some of the opinions of another sect are erroneous, that is not surely a good reason why these last should be hated and persecuted. Your SAVIOUR has forbidden you to hate even your enemies; and you will find it difficult to reconcile your hatred to any religious sect with that solemn prohibition. An erroneous opinion leads to wrong practice and to false hopes. Therefore, those who are in an error are objects of pity, and not of persecution. It is your duty to endeavour to convince them of their error, and to admonish them as brethren, and not to wish to cut them off by the sword of destruction, a sword which God allows you to use in no case whatever, but in that of defending your own life and property, or the life and property of your neighbour. Is there any one pas-
sage

sage of a sacred writer, in the whole Bible, which authorizes persecution for conscience-sake? On the contrary, is not the whole doctrine of CHRIST a direct prohibition of it? It is therefore a most lamentable instance of depravity, to find men making use of that very religion, which strongly inculcates a spirit of meekness and forbearance and love, to justify the most horrid acts of malice and cruelty. And is not that barking at one another, which we hear among even Protestant sects, a strong presumption of their willingness to bite and devour, if they were not restrained by the laws of that government under which they live, and which, in respect of its principles and form, is the most excellent and the most renowned of any with which GOD has ever blessed any nation?

If peculiarities of doctrinal opinion, in matters especially which are not essentially necessary to salvation, ought not to be a hindrance to the different Protestant sects living together in peace and friendship as brethren ought to do, much less ought
mere

mere forms of worship to be a ground of their hatred and quarrels. If, in any case, men shall rest in the mere forms of worship, as the Jews and the Heathens did, without raising their thoughts to God, the only direct object of devotion, or if they shall bow to any thing as an object of worship in the room of Him, they are even guilty of idolatry. But if the form of worship has no direct tendency either to mislead the understanding or to corrupt the heart, or if it is consistent with Scriptural devotion, a small difference among Christian brethren in this case is no proper ground of their mutual alienation of heart. Forms are only the medium thro' which the eye of the mind looks up to God, and by which our thoughts are all concentrated in Him alone. If the form according to which men worship God, is in itself a thing innocent, and has no tendency to divert the thoughts of the worshipper from Him who is the sole object of devotion, as is the case with most of those outward ceremonies which are used by the
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Protestant sects, what harm can arise from the mere form? Therefore, if I was on a journey, and on the Sabbath day found myself nearer to an Episcopal church than to a Presbyterian place of worship, could I have any scruple to worship God, for that day, along with the Episcopalists; though they observe some forms and ceremonies which I may think unnecessary? Was I, in the course of my journey, to fall in, on the next Sabbath, with a place of worship appropriated to the Seceders of this country, could I have the least doubt whether I might, innocently, join with them in worshipping their and my common GOD and SAVIOUR; though they have ideas concerning the law of patronage, and concerning the nature of the burghers-oath, in which I may possibly not agree with them? Why should the friendship of brethren and fellow-disciples be interrupted, and why should their spirits be embittered and their hearts alienated from one another, on account of such little peculiarities,

—so against his religious worship and
estimation

or differences in unessential opinions and matters of form?

Our SAVIOUR, at the very time when he was laying the foundation of the Christian religion, at whose rise the obligation of the Jewish rites and ceremonies were to be cancelled, went to the synagogue every Sabbath-day, and conformed himself to the ordinances that were in use among the Jews. After we have the authority of such a great example, is it possible that his followers can allow themselves to think, that small differences in religious opinions and in forms of worship will be deemed, in the eye of Heaven, a valid excuse for that malice and for those cruelties with which the different Christian sects do treat one another, and for their abhorrence of mutual communion and fellowship? One of the great errors which the Jews fell into, and which begat in them a criminal hatred to men of all other nations, was their believing, that, as their law had forbidden them to have fellowship with idolaters in their religious worship and profane ceremonies,

remories, they ought not even "to keep
"company with, or to come unto one of
"another nation*," and that none of man-
kind but themselves had the hope, or the
promise, of being saved. They were there-
fore equally surpris'd and enraged to hear
a doctrine preached, which taught that
"God is no respecter of persons," and that
"even to the Gentiles also He had grant-
"ed repentance unto life." Let Christians
reflect, whether it is likely, that, in the
great day of judgment, an inquiry will be
made into the sort of religious sect whom
they had joined, and into the forms of
worship which they had observed, and that
more stress will be laid upon these circum-
stances, than upon the sort of temper which
they shall have indulged, and upon the
moral or immoral course of life which
they shall have pursued. Be persuaded,
that from among the people of every na-
tion of the earth, and that from among all
sects and denominations of Christian wor-
shippers,

* Acts x. 28.

shippers, God has chosen some to inherit eternal life.

Different Christian sects have often fought and slain one another on account of opinions and ceremonies, which will be no ground either of defence or of crimination in the great judgment-day. Mens own avarice, or ambition and pride, or malice and superstition, have all along furnished them with those arguments for hating and persecuting the religious sects with whom they differed in speculative opinions, and in matters of form, and for which their zeal for pure and undefiled religion was merely the pretence. But there is not to be found in any one part of the holy and peace-making doctrine of the Son of God the least shadow of an argument for such criminal conduct. The crime of hating and persecuting their brethren and fellow-disciples was far greater than the guilt of those opinions on account of which they unsheathed the sword of persecution. Let Christians remember, that he who hates and persecutes his brethren,

thren, of whatever sect or denomination, is always himself the worst heretic. Our religion is designed to render us more holy than others, and to give us more of the spirit of CHRIST. What ground is there of boasting that our religion renders us superior to others, unless we are led by the spirit of it? Does our religion render us more humble than others in prosperity? Do we derive greater consolation from it in adversity? Are we more pious and more benevolent and forgiving than the Jews and the Heathens? Are we more temperate than they? Are we more virtuous citizens, and more amiable members of a family? If we are not, what is our ground of boasting? "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Make haste, therefore, Christians, to study and to know your own religious system, that its amiable and peaceable spirit may "keep your hearts and your minds," and give a colour to your whole life. Poi-

son not your mutual love and the cement of your brotherly regards to one another at the very fountain, which is that holy religion with which gracious Heaven has favoured you. Be ashamed of that strife and hatred, which render you very unlike to your common Lord and Master, and which cannot fail to provoke his displeasure against you. "How long, how long, O LORD, shall it be, before professing Christians in general shall come to understand, and to feel, the true spirit of the religion of thy holy Son JESUS! How long shall they continue to think, that they are doing service to Thee, by indulging a temper which Thou dost most of all hate! Be graciously pleased to hasten the time, when that sweet bond of union among brethren, which Thy infinite wisdom has invented, and which Thy infinite goodness prompted Thee to send to our world, shall be used for the purpose of promoting peace and forbearance and love, and shall be no more sinfully converted into an engine of malice and strife and enmity."

Thus

Thus I have endeavoured to explain the second great commandment of the Divine law, and to persuade men to observe it. To the arguments derived from the philosophy of natural sentiment and of reason, I have added the still more cogent arguments which flow from the Christian doctrine. My ultimate wish in this small publication, and my fervent prayer to Almighty God, is, that it may have the effect of helping to promote a spirit of Christian love and good neighbourhood, and of checking a spirit of malice and bitterness, in respect of both civil and religious interferences. If this first trial of my success with the impartial public shall have the good fortune to meet with even a moderate degree of approbation, it will soon be succeeded, if God will, by a treatise on the first great commandment of the Divine law, which is, Piety, or the Love of God.

I have been thinking much lately of the
many good people who are laboring in the
cause of truth and righteousness. I have
often wondered how it is that so many
of them are so poor and so lowly
in the eyes of the world. I have
often wondered how it is that so many
of them are so patient and so meek
in the face of persecution and
slandering. I have often wondered
how it is that so many of them are
so full of love and so full of mercy
to their enemies. I have often
wondered how it is that so many
of them are so full of hope and so
full of faith in the future. I have
often wondered how it is that so
many of them are so full of joy and
so full of peace in the midst of
trouble and sorrow. I have often
wondered how it is that so many
of them are so full of courage and so
full of strength in the face of
adversity. I have often wondered
how it is that so many of them are
so full of wisdom and so full of
knowledge. I have often wondered
how it is that so many of them are
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so full of wisdom and so full of
knowledge.

BOOK IV.

An Inquiry into the true DESIGN of
the INSTITUTION of MASONRY.

CHAP. I.

Some Observations on the Institution itself.

IN meditating upon the pleasant and important subject of Brotherly Love, it was scarce possible that I could overlook the Institution of Masonry, whose professed design is to cultivate and improve this amiable temper. The very early institution of Masonry, and the permanency of that science in its original state, through the many revolving ages that are past, is a very wonderful circumstance in the history of mankind. Whether we consider the antiquity of the art, which challenges

a place with the earliest records of society, or the liberal and generous principles upon which it is founded, or the wisdom with which it is contrived to promote friendship, and peace, and reciprocal kindness among men, it is highly deserving of much respect. Even those who are unacquainted with the nature and design of this most ancient Institution, might, by a small degree of reflection, be convinced that it is founded on principles of sound reason and virtue, because it has withstood many formidable attacks from enraged ignorance and superstition, and because it has, in all ages, received the warm support of the great and the wise and the good, who, if they had perceived a hurtful or an immoral tendency in any of its principles, would not only have withheld their patronage of it, but would even have avowed their condemnation of its spirit and tendency. Its real enemies have been always those only, who know not what Masonry is, and who, through prejudice and superstition, ascribed to it dangerous
and

and hurtful effects, with which it is by no means chargeable. It has been often rail-
ed at, and it has even been condemned
and prohibited by public edicts, from that
same kind of inattention to the principles
of reason, which, in a late age of the most
mournful and execrable ignorance and su-
perstition, led men inhumanly to murder
their fellow-creatures, on account of the
supposed crime of witchcraft, or of collu-
sion with the devil. The principles of
Masonry are such that they cannot, in any
respect, be the immediate and direct cause
of making a man do any one impious or
immoral action. The best things may, no
doubt, be abused, as we see has been the
case even with the divine religion of the
SON of GOD. But as the Gospel itself is
not chargeable with the vices and errors
of those who call themselves Christians, nor
with the false systems which have been often
built upon it; so, to compare small things
with great, neither is Masonry, considered
as a science, responsible for the particular
follicies

follies and misconduct of those who are intituled Masons.

It is a thing surprizing, that Masonry should ever have given offence, either to individuals, or to public governments, because Mason-meetings are never held with a view to meddle with the political affairs either of the church or of the state. Since the world began, a Mason-meeting was not held with a view either to disturb the repose of society, or to break the peace of families. At such meetings no revolution either in the church or in the state ever had its origin. There no rebellion was ever framed. No conspiracy was ever formed there. No assassination ever sprung from the principles of that science, or from the forms and ceremonies observed in Mason-lodges. Masons can even boast of a degree of harmony and of good order having prevailed at all their meetings, even since the first year of Masonry, which no other assembly of men, held in virtue of any institution which regards either social converse and relaxation, or matters of private

vate business or of public police, can lay claim to. At Mason-meetings no disorderly scuffles, or indecent wrangles ever happen. No outrage against the person of a brother is ever committed there. Within their hall, those indecent and reproachful expressions, which are not uncommon in other public assemblies, are never heard. To every thing which tends to hurt men either in their persons, or in their property, or in their characters, the science of Masonry is quite adverse. On what account, therefore, are Mason-meetings unpopular conventions? Why are they blamed, since no charge of their being hurtful to the peace or to the interests of society ever has been, or ever can be, brought against them, with any evidence of truth? Are Masons to be blamed for withholding from the knowledge of the world, a secret, which is necessary to the purity and stability of their institution, and to their doing that good by it for which it was originally designed? As nobody thinks of blaming a privy-council for keeping those
affairs

affairs of government a secret, the revealing of which might be hurtful to the state, or of blaming a corporation of tradesmen for keeping such matters a secret as are necessary to promote the prosperity of their professional art, why ought Masons to be blamed for keeping from the world a secret, the preservation of which is absolutely necessary to promote the good purposes of their Institution? In support of the dictates of reason, it is declared, by the authority of the word of GOD, that a power of secrecy is necessary to the existence of true friendship, and that he who revealeth secrets is guilty of a crime, and dissolves the ties of brotherly love. But Masons do not withhold this secret from those who apply to be made acquainted with it, according to the forms which their institution has prescribed. They do not select men of worthless characters, to whom they communicate the secret, as if they designed, through their means, to plan and to carry on some evil designs against the peace and the welfare of society. On
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the contrary, men of bad, or even of suspicious, characters, are excluded from their brotherhood, as far as their knowledge reaches, or as far as is consistent with that charity which every man ought to be possessed of. But with respect to all men of known probity and virtue, they are not only permitted, but they are even kindly invited, to become acquainted with the Mason-art. Therefore, every man who thinks impartially, and who judges by the eye of reason, and not by the suggestions of superstition and prejudice, may be convinced, that Masonry is at least a harmless and an inoffensive Institution.

But it is too weak an Apology for this ancient and noble Institution, to say that it can do no harm. I contend, that this Institution, so long as it shall continue to be under proper management, is calculated to do much good. A reverence for the Supreme Being is interwoven with the whole of its principles. To beget and to improve the temper of brotherly love, or of sincere friendship and good-will among men, was the

the primary design of the Institution. The very design of a Mason-meeting is to exercise, and to improve, that benevolence and undissembled kindness of soul, which is the sweetener of human existence, and which, by its reciprocal influence, is a rich cordial to grief, and which creates cheerfulness in every family, and in every society of men. It is also worth the being remarked, that, at Mason-meetings, greater regard is had to the rules of good manners, than at any other congress assembled for the purpose either of business or of good neighbourhood. In no place are men better taught, than in a Mason-lodge, to respect the rules of that civility and good-breeding, which always renders a man agreeable to those with whom he converses, and to avoid that rusticity and vulgarity of manners, which are always most offensive. There we find a beautiful correspondence and uniformity, in the moral principle of the institution and the outward manners of its votaries. The mutual gentleness and the politeness of the

external behaviour tally with the inward kindness and friendship of the heart.

For near half a century past, the spirit for patronising Masonry has been less ardent, than it was in the days of our forefathers. It is not a thing impossible to investigate the chief causes of this abatement of the wonted zeal for doing honour to the Institution. In an age of commerce, the powers of the mind, in the case of a great proportion of the society, are occupied and absorbed in affairs which relate to the extension and improvement of trade and manufactures, and in their various collateral and consequent avocations. Their thoughts and their time are occupied by a multiplicity of necessary and important business, whereby they have but few vacant hours. Though they be friends to virtue and to civilization of manners, yet they have less leisure, and consequently less inclination, than formerly, to be engaged and occupied as Masons are. Besides, in every thing there is a fashion, which has always

a commanding influence on the minds of men. Over religion itself, however strange it may seem to a pious and virtuous soul, fashion extends its power. Men of superior rank always lead the fashion, even in trifles. By those of superior rank I here mean, not only those who bear titles of honour, but all those who are raised, in power and wealth, above the middle class of the plebeians. Whenever that order of the society begin to desert any public meetings, for whatever purpose they may be held, from that time the convention declines both in respect of name and of attendance.

Moreover, in whatever institution there are equalising principles, by which those who observe it are all put upon a level, such is the foolish pride of heart in some, that they are averse from attending those assemblies of their fellow-men, wherein their inferiors become their equals. But those of superior power and opulence are much mistaken, when they think that they lessen their dignity and importance, by mingling with their inferiors

riors in such exercises and employments as relate either to the embellishment of society or to the improvement of the mind. By exhibiting their superior wisdom, and by giving a public proof of their affability and polite manners, they are indeed less dreaded, but they become more respected. They are there less abstracted from the crowd, but they are more beloved.

To the above causes of mens absence from particular assemblies, which are held for the purpose of religious and moral improvement, may be added that of ignorance of the principles of the institution, by whose authority such assemblies are held. A man's mind cannot be properly influenced by that which he does not understand. By not understanding any system, he does not enter into the spirit of it, and he has no relish for it. He has even an aversion to attend assemblies, and to be engaged in exercises, wherein he perceives that the knowledge of others, even of his inferiors, is superior to his own. But is not this an

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argument for a man's being at some degree of pains to understand that which others know, especially when the knowledge of it is a thing of importance? I am not here pleading to make profelytes to Masonry, but only exhorting the professional brethren themselves to be at pains to know their own secret Art, and the principles upon which it is founded.

Combine the above-mentioned causes, and ye will be able to explain the reason why Mason-meetings are lessened, both in respect of numbers and of reputation.

I hope that it will not be esteemed an impropriety to observe here, that the very same causes will, in part at least, account for a much more mournful neglect of mens assembling themselves together, and for purposes far more intrinsically and extensively important than those which the institution of Masonry can pretend to. Combine those causes, and you will be able, in part at least, to account for the absence of too great a number of that order of men from places wherein, if

they are in health, we ought always to find them, both for their own sake, because they are made religious creatures, and also for the sake of doing good to others by their example. From those causes you will be able to give a reason why we see so few of that order of the society mingled with the inferior classes of men in those assemblies which are held, by a Divine authority, for the solemn and important purpose of worshipping the Supreme Being. In casting your eye over a Communion-table, at least in some places of public worship throughout the whole kingdom, what a truly mournful and affecting thing is it to one who loves his GOD and SAVIOUR, and who has a real concern for the salvation of others, to see so few of the above description of men sitting as equals with the lower class of their brethren and fellow-disciples, in doing honour to the memory of the Blessed SAVIOUR of the world. O Divine JESUS, is this the kind of acknowledgment which thou receivest from the inhabitants of this earth, for

having established, at the expence of thy own blood, a religion which polishes the manners of men, and which secures the rich in their property, by begetting in the hearts of thy disciples the love of justice and mercy; a religion, which is the stability and the exaltation of empires, because it begets in the hearts of men that fear of God, and that love of peace and sobriety and good order, which are the best executors of the laws; a religion, the practice of which yields self-approbation and all the sweet fruits of a virtuous life, and which inspires the hope of a blessed immortality? What a degree of reverence and love is due to the gracious Founder of this best institution that the world ever saw! I have made this digression, from a strong desire of seizing every proper opportunity of exhorting my fellow-men to reverence and to attend public worship, both for their own sake, and for the sake of the good of society, whose best interests depend still more upon the institutions of public religion than upon any civil

civil laws or regulations whatever. Public religion is a better executor of the civil laws of every country than even the sword of the civil magistrate. The civil power is never long regarded after religion falls into contempt.

If those causes which I have mentioned, have the power of operating even in the case of the ordinances and institutions of the Christian religion, and in matters wherein the salvation of mens souls are immediately concerned, it is not by any means surprising that they should take effect in the institution of Masonry, or of any other civil institution, which, compared with the sacred institution of the Gospel, is next to nothing. Still, however, I contend that Masonry, especially with those great improvements which it may derive from the spirit of Christianity, may be of some real service in promoting friendship among men. It may be profitably used as an handmaid to religion in enforcing a regard to the great duty of love to our neighbour. It is a strong

help to the observance of that duty, because it is accompanied with the peculiar advantage of visible forms and ceremonies, which always touch the heart with sensibility and with force. Therefore, men of rank and property ought to show a willingness to patronize the Mason-institution, in proportion to the degree in which it may subserve the valuable purpose of friendship and good agreement among men. Their presence must necessarily tend to give force to the operation of its native principles. Many wise and good princes of past ages, sensible of the public benefit which may be derived from this institution, did themselves personally countenance it, and encouraged their subjects to frequent Mason-meetings, which they saw were in themselves innocent, and which, under proper management, might be made subservient to the peace and good order of society, and to the reciprocal friendship and happiness of mankind in every private and relative capacity.

CHAP.

C H A P. II.

*A Plan for rendering Masonry subservient to
a new and valuable Purpose,*

I BEG leave now to suggest an idea, which is, perhaps, wholly my own, but which I indulge with a peculiar fondness. I have for a long while thought, that Masonry might be made subservient to a most valuable purpose, to which men have not yet applied it. It might be made the channel, through which the knowledge of the Christian religion may be communicated to the Jews and Mahometans and Pagans, and with some probability of success. The method which I propose of trying to make those who know not the Christian religion become acquainted with it, and which has some peculiar advantages, is this. It is well known that the principles of Masonry are so liberal, that they do not hinder those

of every religious persuasion from associating together, and treating one another as brethren and as friends. Masonry, with a generosity and liberality of spirit peculiar to itself, excludes no man from its society, on account of his being of a different religious persuasion. It is also well known, that brotherly love is the grand fundamental PRINCIPLE of the Institution; and that to improve this amiable temper in one another, is the primary design for which Masons do hold their meetings. Hence a book wrote upon this branch of Christianity could be easily introduced to the acquaintance of the brethren of all Mason-lodges. It is likewise known, that the art of Masonry forms a chain of connection and a very strong bond of union among at least a certain number of mankind in every nation of the whole world. Therefore, if a book wrote upon the subject of Brotherly Love, wherein the principles of Christianity, which have an immediate relation to that subject, are explained, was once introduced among the brethren

brethren of those lodges who are yet unacquainted with the Christian doctrine, might not this, perhaps, be of some use in propagating the blessed religion of the Son of God? It is by no means an unlikely thing, that this holy religion, which a Divine hand has so graciously and so wisely accommodated to the state of human nature, might thereby insinuate itself, gradually and insensibly, into the acquaintance and esteem of those, who have not hitherto known its amiable spirit and its sweet beneficial tendency. If they should happen to be pleased with the spirit of the Christian doctrine in so far as it relates to the duty of brotherly love, they would be naturally led to examine the Scriptures of the New Testament, and to inquire more fully into the nature of its whole system.

Here, therefore, a door is opened to public-spirited Christian Masons for the exercise of true charity and brotherly love. Here an occasion presents itself for their doing much good, and for their becoming eminent benefactors to mankind, if they shall

shall succeed in a generous attempt to propagate the Christian religion, in those places where it is not yet made known, through the medium of their relation to the Mason-fraternity in every part of the world. If a committee of their number shall be appointed by the different Mason-lodges in our native empire, to form a correspondence with their less enlightened brethren, and endeavour to make them acquainted with the Christian rules of brotherly love, who knows what good effects, under the patronage of a gracious Providence, may arise from this small beginning? And if the foregoing Essay on this subject shall not be deemed an explication of this branch of the Christian system, that could answer the purpose of recommending the doctrine of the Gospel, in general, to their acquaintance and esteem, or to excite their curiosity to search the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament, from a desire of knowing more of the spirit of these Divine writings, let another book be wrote on this subject

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by some more able hand. I shall be most happy to see the attempt made through this proposed channel, in whatever way the superior wisdom of others shall think proper to conduct the plan of it. I shall be fully satisfied with the honour of having first suggested the idea of this very laudable undertaking.

I am very sensible, that many will laugh at this proposal, and will treat it scornfully, as being a thing extravagant and chimerical. Without stating the objections which, I know, will be made to this plan, I shall just hint at an answer to some of them. It cannot be denied, that Mason-meetings are held among the Jews and the Mahometans, as well as among the Christians. Among the more polished Heathens, the art of Masonry is also known and practised. Nay, if we may believe some travellers of great credit, Masonry is not unknown to the Savages in the desarts of Africa and America. The success of this plan does, no doubt, depend upon a very great variety of circumstances, that
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are necessary to concur both in forwarding its execution, and in reaping the expected fruits of it. I should not despair of finding some individuals, and even a whole Lodge of Christian Masons, to engage in making the trial, provided they can be brought to think that there is the least probability of success.

Let it be considered, that every thing whatever must have a beginning; and that, from a very small beginning, the greatest revolutions of power, and the most important events that ever happened, have sprung. God can so arrange these circumstances, as to facilitate the accomplishment, and forward the progress of a design, which, if it be consistent with the purposes of His Providence, will surmount every difficulty, and will be crowned with success. Who knows but that he may have already secretly prepared and ripened the world for this additional enlargement of the kingdom of His SON? If the era be arrived, wherein he intends to make a greater proportion of the Jews and of the Heathens to partici-

participate with us in the blessings and privileges of the gospel, He can make the smallest instrument to be of sufficient power to usher in the happy revolution. He can make even seeming obstacles to minister to the fulfilment of His own gracious designs. From causes seemingly inadequate to the end, He gave a firm root, and an extensive growth, and an immovable permanency, to the Christian religion. From means the most unlikely to succeed, He made that glorious light to issue forth, which has overspread the earth. That same Holy Spirit, who, at the beginning, propagated the Christian religion, through the ministry of unlearned Fishermen, is still able to render means, seemingly weak and inefficacious, to be of sufficient power to enlarge the boundaries of the Mediator's Kingdom.

If this plan shall be adopted, and if it shall succeed through the blessing of Him, who makes the small grain of mustard-seed to wax strong, and become a large tree, it will place a new and a fair diamond
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in the crown of Masonry. It will give an additional lustre to the Institution in the eye of all mankind. How great a degree of pleasure would it also give to all benevolent souls, engaged in forwarding such a scheme, to be the instruments of civilizing their fellow-creatures, and of making them feel the sweet influence of true religion upon their hearts and their course of life, and of saving their souls! There is a sufficient inducement to make the trial, if there be but the smallest degree of possibility, that, from this small spark caught from the Christian lamp, a light may arise to let the Jews see the true meaning of the writings of their own prophets, and to take away, were it but in part, that cloud of delusion with which the Mahometan nations are covered, and to show the pitiable Heathens the true way of salvation. Look at St Paul's zeal for propagating the Christian religion, and endeavour to catch some of its fire. That object which was pleasing to GOD in his zeal, cannot be displeasing to Him in yours.

CHAP.

C H A P. III.

A Charge to the Fraternity of Free Masons.

MUCH ESTEEMED AND WELL BELOVED BRETHREN,
I BEG that you will forgive my using the freedom of addressing you as a society, and of reminding you of what you owe to your illustrious institution, and to the memory of your Ancestors, who gloried in possessing that temper and good conduct, which were suitable to their own obligations of duty, and which reflected honour upon the Mason-art. I now speak to initiated brethren over the whole earth, with a brother's freedom, but at the same time with a brother's love. I have taken the liberty of giving you this charge, not with the smallest view of assuming any degree of superiority, or a right even to instruct, but only to express my extreme veneration

tion for the Mason-institution, and my ardent wish that the fraternity may always so conduct themselves, as to exhibit before one another, and to show to the whole world, that beautiful decency and that respectable propriety of manners, which the principles of their art do most strictly enjoin.

Masonry is a science of very great antiquity. Natural sentiment itself invented the Institution. Men had only to add a few visible and corresponding forms and ceremonies to make up a liberal Art, whose primeval principle is nature's own sacred law of reciprocal friendship, or brotherly love. Its venerable antiquity, joined with the circumstance of its having been embraced and patronized by the learned and the wise and the good men of every age, intitles it to a very great degree of respect. The wisdom with which its plan is contrived, to subserve the purpose of inculcating piety and charity and civility of manners, and of reducing the rules of these to real practice, is a thing well known

known to every brother, and has been sufficiently evinced by the longevity and permanency of the Institution. Its stability has sufficiently demonstrated the purity and the virtue of its principles, and their perfect congruity to sound reason, and to the best dictates of the human mind. Its long and uninterrupted existence in the world is a circumstance which cannot escape the observation of the contemplative, nor fail to excite some degree of wonder, in those at least who understand not its pure and well-formed system. Masonry has stood the waste of time, through many revolving ages. Amidst the successive revolutions of states and empires, of human laws and customs, Masonry has remained without any change in its principles, and without even any material alteration of its original form. Placed on the immoveable basis of the best natural principles of the human heart, its pillars have remained unshaken amidst the rage of every varied storm, and to this hour they have suffered no decay. The inno-

cence and purity of its principles, and their direct tendency to prevent malice and strife, those greatest enemies to human happiness, and to promote peace and love, and thereby to give the most pleasing exercise to all the finest feelings of the soul, have made the knowledge of this science to be propagated and well received all over the world. By these it has resisted the power of regal edicts, and bid defiance to the envenomed darts of malice and superstition, which, at different periods, have been showered from many quarters.

The effects which have been produced by Masonry, in preventing bitterness and strife, those worst of human evils, and in promoting kindness of heart and a peaceable social intercourse among men, whereby their mutual visits and conjunct labours were reciprocally sweetened, are great and good. When Noah's posterity, in a rude and an unpolished age of the world, set about the building of a tower in the plain of Shinar, whose summit they vainly

vainly proposed should reach the heavens, they wrought together in peace and friendship, through the sweet influence of scientific Masonry. Among an army of artificers and workmen of different kinds, to whom the sacred rules of virtue in general were but ill known, such was the power of this noble Art, that they lived together and carried on their conjunct labours in a state of mutual friendship and love.

Whilst Solomon's temple, that stupendous edifice, which was one of the wonders of the world, was a-building, the operative Masons and the artificers and labourers of all sorts, composed of different nations and languages, and whose number consisted of many thousands, did all live together in a state of sweet peace and good agreement. The Masons Art was the cement of their reciprocal friendship. It was the bond of their harmonious union and brotherly love. King Solomon, the wisest of men, saw the good effects which were to be derived from the Mason-institution, and he warmly patronized it. Himself

presided as Grand Master of the celebrated Lodge at Jerusalem; and from him that noble science received some improvements in respect of its form, which, to this day, have been strictly observed. All who have considered this subject are agreed, that the science of Masonry, which at that time, and long after, was held in the utmost veneration at Jerusalem, even to a degree of enthusiasm, was the happy bond of that unity and brotherly love, which subsisted among the builders of that celebrated house of the LORD. The solemnity of the Mason-meetings, which were held at Jerusalem, in King Solomon's time, was such as gave the most powerful touches to the souls of all those who were present in the Mason-hall. The speeches of the wise King Solomon addressed to the Brethren, the grandeur of the music flowing from the instruments which his Father King David had invented, the decent behaviour and the reciprocal love of the Fraternity, and the splendid ornaments and illuminations of the hall itself, did all conspire to
render

render their practice of Masonry a grand and solemn thing.

The Mason's art is a sweet tie of friendship among the scientific Brothers, wherever they go. It is a ground of their mutual acquaintance, and of their associating together with the reciprocal sentiments of true friends. In every corner of the world, it is to a stranger an acceptable letter of introduction to a numerous and respectable circle of acquaintances. It equalizes men of all ranks and professions, without taking away that right to superior respect, which superior virtue always justly claims. It levels all distinctions, that are founded on mere external circumstances, and makes the exalted noble and the man of low degree, the learned and the unlearned, the rich and the poor, to meet together as equals and as brothers. From its absorption of all titles and external notes of difference in one great and pleasant name of BROTHER, pride is forced to fly from the society. Hereby the whole Brotherhood are taught the useful lesson of humility

and condescension, and are put in mind of the latter end of man, when all titles of distinction are buried with himself in the grave, and when outward notes of difference are obliterated and regarded no more. This equalization of the Brotherhood, met together in sweet congress, is the pleasant emblem of that delightful state of amity and condescension, free from pride and from every unsocial passion that produces alienation of heart, in which men would always live together in all families and societies, if their mutual love was as warm and sincere as it ought to be.

Of that kind temper, and of that condescending behaviour which men owe to one another, our SAVIOUR has given us many amiable and affecting examples. By these he graciously designed to teach us to love one another, and to be affable, and to behave with condescension to others. And it is pleasant to you, Brethren, to observe how well the chief principle of your liberal Art corresponds to the great Christian duty

duty of love to our neighbour, and which our SAVIOUR has explained and enforced, in a degree, in which no one before him ever did, or could have done. By proper attention to the Christian rules of brotherly love, the spirit of Masonry may be enlivened and improved, in a degree far beyond what even Solomon himself could have any conception of. For that reason, the practice of the Masons Art in a Lodge of Christians is fitted to give such fine touches to all the moral feelings of the soul, as are far superior to what can possibly be felt by those Masons, who are unacquainted with the Gospel-discoveries of our being all the adopted children of one gracious Father in heaven, who loves us, and of our being the disciples of one compassionate and kind SAVIOUR, who died for us all, that we might live for ever with him in the Celestial Paradise, and of our being fellow-travellers to a future state of eternal felicity and glory, where our friendships will be continued, and made perfect

both in sweetness and in duration. These are discoveries which cannot fail to enliven and improve the spirit of Masonry, and to give such fuel to the fire of brotherly love, as none but Christians know any thing of.

In conducting the whole process of your forms, let the true spirit and principle of the institution always appear and shine forth. During the whole time of your brotherly meeting, let your conversation turn upon such subjects as are at once entertaining to every rational mind, and as are useful and edifying to all. Judicious and virtuous brethren, and especially those whose minds are enlightened by that variety of gracious doctrines which the Gospel contains, can never be at a loss to lead and to vary the conversation so, that the train of it shall be always both pleasant and improving. While it is such as suits and pleases social and virtuous friends, let it also be always characteristical of true Mason-brothers. Let such a conversation

as tends to soften and improve the heart be always mingled with social conviviality and innocent gaiety.

It is well known to you, Brethren, that no art or science can be properly learned without practice. Without practice, the principles of no science can be even well understood: And unless its principles are rightly understood, they cannot touch the heart. Therefore, he can be only a cold-hearted Mason who does not enter into the spirit of his science, and who understands not the principles upon which it is built: And these principles are of such a kind, that they require a certain degree of study to know them. Without the knowledge of its principles and the design of its Institution, the true spirit of Masonry is lost. In that case, men are apt to rest in some outward circumstances of mere form, without feeling the designed moral influence of the institution, or they are ready to conceive an aversion to a science, the power of which their hearts do not feel, and the

real meaning of which they do not even comprehend.

Let brothers and friends remember, that the power of secrecy is necessary to the very existence of true friendship. Thus said the wise Solomon, "A tale-bearer revealeth secrets : But he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter, A froward man soweth strife, and a whisperer separateth chief friends."

You need not to be informed that your science is calculated to inspire you with the awe and love of God, the great Master-builder of the worlds, on all whose works He has stamped the image of his own absolute perfection. In erecting the vast stupendous universe, He was not obliged to proceed by a slow and tedious progression, as Masons do in rearing their artificial fabrics : But, "God said, Let there be light : and there was light. He spake, and it was done ; he commanded, and it stood fast." It is not to be doubted that Masonry ought to be considered more in a religious

ligious view than it commonly is. Piety and charity being the fundamental principles of the Institution, unless these are kept in view both as the cause of your reverence and decency, and as the source of the pleasure which you feel in the practice of your Art, one chief design for which your brotherly meetings are held, will be totally frustrated.

After what has been already said, it is scarce needful to remind you of the many solemn obligations which your profession of Masonry lays you under to put away malice and strife and every evil work, and to feel for each other the warm affection of brothers. Fraternal peace and amity is the great seal of this ancient and noble Institution. Through all its principles, it breathes a spirit of gentleness, forbearance and love. All its appointed ceremonies conspire with its principles to beget, and to improve, the temper of kindness and good will, and more especially while ye sit in congress together, and in the immediate exercise of your professional character.

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Genuine gladness of heart may be naturally expected at a meeting of Brethren, professedly assembled to give full exercise to all the benevolent affections of the soul, and to banish every vile passion that would lead you either to do, or even to wish, harm to your neighbour. The hall wherein ye assemble, for purposes which are so worthy of men and Brethren, must seem to send forth a sweet fragrance, like the scent of flowers in the spring; and the pleasant sight of such a sincere union of hearts is a thing refreshing to the mind, like the dews of summer. If the spirit of those principles which are the primordials of your science, animates your hearts, it will render all your meetings not only innocent and joyous, but also truly useful. It will make the native sentiment of benevolence, with which the Supreme CREATOR at first inspired the human heart, to glow with an additional warmth. It will furnish new fuel to the fire of reciprocal affection, and make it burn with ardor. It will raise all the kind affections of the soul into fervour,
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and make the flame of pure love, with all its concomitant emotions and joys, to glow in the heart of every Brother. Hereby you give a real feast to the best virtuous feelings of the soul. And as the pure and innocent ceremonies of the Institution are also calculated to fan the fire of kind affection, so the mutual correspondence of hearts all laid open to its pleasing influence, will tend to banish the very last dregs of envy and strife and faction from the inaugurated mansion of friendship, and will even help to prevent their return to your breasts, during your ordinary commerce with the world. Such a happy state of pure love among brethren on earth is the joyful emblem of that holy and undisguised friendship which shall subsist, without interruption and without end, among the celestial Brotherhood.

If, brethren, you shall carry this temper and these principles along with you into your respective Lodges, your frame of mind there will be habitually such, as will render all your meetings so decent and
orderly,

orderly, that they who, from not knowing what the real nature of your science is, view it with an eye of groundless jealousy and prejudice, will have "no evil thing to say of you." If ye always act in the true spirit of your Art, no instance of riot or of intemperance will ever be heard of among you. The sentiment of brotherly love, when it is sincere, is strong and fervent in the heart; but its outward expressions are, nevertheless, always mild and placid. Great attention ought also to be given to the mode of conducting your meetings, and of administering the official services, that every thing may be done according to the rules of strict order and discipline, whereby the behaviour of every member of the Lodge may be made to correspond, in a beautiful consistency, to the original principles and design of the institution.

Look carefully into the state of the funds established for the relief of your needy brethren. Let the expenditure of your treasury be managed with good œconomy

conomy, for the sake of putting it in your power to be the more liberal and the more extensively useful to them. That provision which is the fruit of your brotherly associations, is a very important effect proceeding from the radical Institution. In your choice of the Masters and Officers and Brethren, have always a due regard to visible temper and character, that the noble Institution may not suffer by an improper choice, but that the purposes of piety and charity may be promoted, and that the real pleasure thereof may be felt at every meeting.

Besides those arguments for the exercise of a charitable spirit, which are founded on the nature of the Christian dispensation, and some of which have been already urged, it may not be improper to remind you of that Charge concerning the poor, which God has given by the mouth of His servant Moses. "If there
"be among you a poor man of one of
"thy brethren, within any of thy gates,
"in thy land which the Lord thy God
"giveth

"giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thy
 "heart, nor shut thy hand from thy poor
 "brother: But shalt open thy hand wide
 "unto him, and shalt surely lend him suf-
 "ficient for his need in that which he want-
 "eth. Beware that there is not a thought
 "in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh
 "year, the year of release, is at hand:
 "and thine eyes be evil against thy poor
 "brother, and thou givest him nought,
 "and he cry unto the Lord against thee,
 "and it be sin unto thee. Thou shalt
 "surely give him, and thine heart shall
 "not be grieved when thou givest unto
 "him: Because that for this thing the
 "Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy
 "works, and in all that thou puttest thine
 "hand unto. For the poor shall never
 "cease out of the land. Therefore I com-
 "mand thee, saying, Thou shalt open
 "thine hand wide unto thy brother, to
 "thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy
 "land *."

But let Mason-brothers remember, that
 "they

they ought to be Brothers, not only in their scientific Lodges, but also in the world at large. In every part of your journey through this life's crooked and mixed way, wherein alternate evils and joys are found, and wherein ye all profess to be bending your course toward the regions of perfect harmony, "Let brotherly love continue!" On no part of the road let yourselves fall into vain disputes and quarrels, which always create much grief and trouble, and which can bring you no profit. Carry the spirit of the Mason-art into your families at home, and into society abroad. Let it accompany you in public and in private life, in the solitary walk, and in the crowded assembly. Then will that brotherly love, and that charity and goodness of heart, characterise you in every department of life, which are the boast and the joy of your Mason-associations.

Let not your love to one another be circumscribed to an anniversary-day, or to the more ordinary meetings which ye hold in the character of professional brethren,

thren, but let it give a visible and amiable colour to your behaviour in every circle of your fellow-men, and in every part of your commerce with the world, and in every circumstance of your whole life. Without this, one essential part of the design of your Institution will be wholly lost; and without this, ye will neglect one necessary part of your preparation for being admitted into those glorious mansions above, where the love of brethren is perfect, and where the joyful fruits of it are everlasting.

Moreover, reflect that the Mason-institution is designed to improve in you that temper of benevolence, whose object is not Mason-brothers only, but all mankind. I shall not repeat here, but only remind you of, what has been already said in the foregoing Treatise, concerning the ties which the Christian religion has laid you under to love all men, and which are far more sacred and binding than those that can be imposed by Masonry. It should also be considered, that, by living habitually in the temper of good-will to mankind,

kind, ye do at the same time fulfil the whole law of justice, as well as of love to your neighbour. Every transgression of the rules of justice implies the want of a proper degree of love to mankind. Therefore, if ye are led by the true spirit of your Institution, which is designed to improve in you the sweet temper of kindness and charity, ye will, in consequence of this professional Art, enjoy a strong additional motive to keep the whole law of God, and especially those commands of the Second Table of it, which do more immediately respect a right behaviour to our fellow-men, and which commandments our SAVIOUR, in his sermons, has beautifully commented upon and explained. I shall conclude this Charge, which I have taken the freedom of giving you, in the words of St Paul, to whom, it is likely, the art of Masonry was well known, and whose doctrine is perfective of its spirit. "Finally, Brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace."

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